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EXTRACTS

FROM THE

DIARY

OF THE LATE

REV. ROBERT SHIRREFF,

MINISTER OF THE ASSOCIATE CONGREGATION, TRANENT.

WITH

Brief Notices of his Life,

AND

AN APPENDIX OF PAPERS BY MRS. S.

EDINBURGH:

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The subject of the following short Memoir was a faithful minister of Christ, dearly loved and honoured wherever he was known; but, from a native unobtrusiveness of character and from having contracted retired habits by close study, not very extensively known in the churches of Christ. He was the intimate companion of my youth. Being about the same age, and having the same views, we contracted a mutual friendship, which continued unbroken and unabated from the 14th year of our ages to the period of his death. The Diary I obtained from his family. In reading it, I felt no common interest: indeed I might blush deeply in perusing the authentic documents of the eminent religious attainments of my dear friend.

From my earliest acquaintance with him, I could not but esteem Mr. Shirreff truly pious; but his attainments in true Christianity, as exhibited in these papers, have amazed me. Such knowledge of his own heart, such Christian confidence, deep humility, true resignation, devotedness to God and his cause, are truly admirable.

I hope these papers of Mr. and Mrs. Shirreff will, under a divine blessing, be useful to many, both ministers and private Christians.

It is pleasant to find so much eminent Christianity among us, and to see that there are still some who are indeed the epistles of Christ, seen and read of all men.

JOHN BROWN.

Whitburn,
January 2, 1821.

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BRIEF NOTICES

OF THE LATE

REV. ROBERT SHIRREFF,

OF TRANENT.

THIS most amiable man, devout Christian, and faithful minister, was born in the year 1754, at Wester-Broomhouse, near Dunbar, in East Lothian. His father, Mr. William Shirreff, was the pious and respectable tenant of that farm, and an elder in the associate congregation of Dunbar. At what period Robert began to seek the Lord God of his fathers, it is impossible to say; but it is certain that his religious impressions were of a very early date. To an intimate friend he stated, that some serious advices addressed to his elder brothers by the late venerable Mr. Hutton of Dalkeith, when on a visit at Broomhouse, being overheard by him, then little more than an infant, deeply affected him. He received his grammar-school education at Dunbar; and while residing there, was in the habit of attending a prayer-meeting held in the house of a near relative. At this period of his life he was distinguished by a peculiarly pleasing seriousness of demeanour; and the writer of this recollects with me-

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lancholy delight having been on one occasion the unsuspected ear witness of his fervent secret devotions. The works of the Rev. Ralph Erskine, published about this time, in 2 vols. folio, were read by him with much interest and advantage. In November 1771, he commenced his literary and philosophical studies in the university of Edinburgh; and after the ordinary course, placed himself under the care of the Rev. John Brown of Haddington, Professor of Divinity under the inspection of the Associate Synod. Having finished his five years of theological study, he was licensed by the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh on the 3d of March, 1778; and was ordained, by the same presbytery, pastor of the lately formed congregation of Tranent, to which he had been unanimously called, on the 5th of January, 1779. On February 29, 1788, he was married to Miss Marjory Hutton, youngest daughter of the Rev. William Hutton, Dalkeith, a young lady of uncommon piety and accomplishments; but of whom it pleased Providence to deprive him within eighteen months. She died in child-bed, leaving an infant daughter. How deeply he felt, and how patiently he bore this affliction, will appear from the following papers. Having continued a widower for several years, he again married Miss Margaret Watson of Haddington, a pious respectable young lady, who survived him, and by whom he has left a numerous family. In the discharge of his ministerial duties he was most regular, diligent, faithful, and affectionate: he was retired in his habits; and his studies and reading

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were chiefly, though not exclusively, theological. The book of God was his favourite companion; and, as a preacher, he was mighty in the Scriptures. In the bosom of his own family his manners were singularly affectionate and engaging. He possessed an uncommon talent for religious conversation, and seemed to find great enjoyment in this exercise. He usually spent a considerable time every day, in his place of worship, in solitary religious meditation. During the earlier part of his ministry, he was blessed with a very good state of health, and it was conscientiously devoted to the service of his Master. In consequence of a severe nervous fever in 1800, his last years were afflicted with asthma. But, under many infirmities, he continued to discharge all his ministerial duties. So great was his delight in these, that even in his last days, he had, during a considerable part of the year, an evening lecture in his meeting-house; and frequently, on a summer evening, used to preach in the surrounding villages. When unable to visit the afflicted, he used to send them letters of direction and comfort. He felt a deep interest in the rising generation, and was an active supporter of Sabbath evening schools. He published nothing but some papers in the Christian Magazine. He died on Thursday, January 27, 1820.

The following sketch of his character was written by a very intimate Christian friend: "From his earliest years this singularly pious man felt the influence of divine truth; and into what beauteous and delectable forms it afterwards increased, is well

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known to many. He was well prepared by study, meditation, and prayer, for the duties of the pastoral office. The writer of this sketch cannot but remember the high tone of holy fervour with which, in the earlier part of his ministry, he held forth the word of life; and how by degrees it softened down into that earnest, serious, and winning manner, by which his public labours were afterwards characterized. Devotion seemed to pour forth from his lips in one continuous stream; and that heart must have been cold and dead which could hear without emotion. With few pretensions to the ornaments of speech, by the force of truth, by the power of devotion, and by that command of himself in public, to which, by the divine blessing, he had eminently attained, he exercised over the minds of his hearers all the influence of an accomplished orator. They felt, because he was affected, they wept, because he set the example; the effect being aided by the happy prepossession that the good man spake out of the abundance of his heart, and had nothing in view but their welfare. The subjects on which he insisted in the course of his ministry were the great leading doctrines of Christianity; the illustration of which was drawn chiefly from the fountain of truth, the sacred oracles, with which his mind was richly furnished. By what an affecting arrangement of Scripture language would he describe the misery and helplessness of our nature! and with what force launch forth the thunders of the Eternal's vengeance against the sinner who goes on in his trespasses! Nor were words smoother or more mov-

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ing ever employed to persuade men to flee to the Saviour. When discoursing of the riches of sovereign goodness, of the excellencies of Jesus Christ, and of the fulness of his grace, he was in his own element; and here he would dwell and dilate with a copiousness expressive of the pleasure which he felt. He did not much approve of the conduct of many good and faithful men in devoting a whole sermon to the discussion of a particular vice, but he never neglected an opportunity of bearing an honest testimony against every unholy practice; and when circumstances called for such a testimony, this opportunity, he used to say, was never wanting in the ordinary course either of lecturing or of preaching. And as he warned his hearers against every thing which he conceived to be sinful, he urged them to holiness with an earnestness almost peculiar to himself.

"His discourses were addressed to the heart, and the style was suited to his object, being plain, glowing, and scriptural; the farthest removed possible, on the one hand, from every appearance of affectation, and, on the other, from all approach to meanness and vulgarity.

"It may well be supposed that such principles and objects could not exist without a holy practice; and it is known to many what he was in life, what an example to the believer in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

"He was *patient in tribulation*, not indeed from a selfish repulsive apathy, for his sensibilities were naturally strong, but from those divine principles

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with which his whole spirit was imbued, and by which all his conduct was regulated. It was edifying to observe his personal afflictions, as they returned in succession, forming his character more and more into an almost perfect acquiescence in the will of God; and many of his hearers will long remember the happy effect of a great domestic trial*, in those earnest addresses to the throne of grace, and those pathetic appeals to conscience in favour of faith and resignation, by which it was followed.

"*The love of peace* was a leading feature of his character. He lived in peace with all men. He enjoyed that peace which is the fruit of righteousness; and his latter end, as might well be expected, was peace.

"He was *affectionate* in his whole deportment. To a stranger he might at first sight seem somewhat inaccessible, but this apparent shyness was soon forgotten in the kindness and familiarity of more particular intercourse. His love to the people of his charge was fervent, and he was regarded by them in return with no less fervour. But his kindness was not confined to them; he was a lover of all good men, and delighted in the society of the pious, to whatever denomination of Christians they might belong. He did not affect to lead the conversation when in company with his friends, but he had the happy art, by some pious reflection, to render it dignified and edifying. There is one part of his conduct, which is so characteristic that I can-

* The death of his first wife.

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not pass it without remark, I mean that unbending integrity for which he was eminently conspicuous: "He feared God, and he had no other fear." Nor would any consideration of advantage or suffering tempt him to swerve from the path of duty. I verily believe that although no penalty had been denounced against insincerity, such were his ideas of moral rectitude, that he could not have been insincere; and that although truth had not been commanded, the very pleasure which he felt in the observance of it would have secured his adherence to all its laws. He was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.

"I have only to add here, that he was most assiduous in all the duties of a Christian pastor. He was willing to be spent in the cause of his Master; and if there was a fault here, it was that he abounded in these duties beyond what his strength could well bear.

"Such was this godly man, whose praise is in the churches where he had an opportunity of being known. But among his people he lived, to them he was best known; and they are his witnesses how holily, justly, and unblameably, he behaved himself among them. They know, likewise, how he exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of them as a father doth his children, that they should walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory. By the death of this righteous man his country has lost a true friend, the church one of its chief ornaments, his afflicted spouse an affectionate husband, who was ready to enter into all her

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griefs as well as joys, the tender branches of the family a principal source of their spiritual growth and vigour, his dear people have lost a faithful pastor, who longed much for them all in the bowels of Jesus Christ; and, let the writer be permitted to add, he has lost a dear and stedfast friend, who was the same in all the varying circumstances of his lot, in whose faithful breast he could lodge with confidence his most secret concerns, and of whose affection he would consider a kind of sacrilege to lose the grateful remembrance.

"The change in the congregation and family of this worthy man is sudden and afflicting: only ten days previous to the fatal event he was addressing them from the pulpit with a fervour which entered into their very souls, and of which they will retain the remembrance while memory itself exists.

"For the two last days of his life he was aware of the approaching event, but was in no degree disconcerted: he looked forward to it with a perfect composure, distributing consolations among the members of his affectionate family, giving them a reason of the hope that was in him; repeating at one time the memorable aphorism, 'all's well that ends well;' at another time telling them of a saint 'who closed his eyes, and saw his God;' and bidding them, in the words of Addison, 'come and see how a Christian can die.'

"As his life had been calm and tranquil, so his death was serene and peaceful. During his illness, he was employed in prayer, and in repeating texts of Scripture, and passages of hymns. On the day

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before his death he observed, 'the scheme of redemption is a glorious scheme.' Though he had often a severe struggle with his sore complaint, (the asthma,) he never suffered any expression of impatience to fall from his lips. More than once he remarked, that those who get to heaven at the end, will not quarrel with the way by which they were led thither. Sometimes, indeed, he would repeat that line,

> 'Life in such bondage is a wretched thing.'

And often he appeared to cheer himself with the two last lines of that verse,

> 'His gracious hand shall wipe the tear
> From every weeping eye;
> And pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
> And death itself, shall die.'

Twice or thrice in the course of that mournful day before he died, he said, 'Why are his chariot wheels so long of coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?' At other times he would repeat that saying of a good man under affliction, 'Lord, what thou wilt, when thou wilt, how thou wilt.' In prayer he begged that God would be the Father of his family, and the Shepherd of his little flock. Several times he quoted these words, 'I die, but God will be with you;' and added, 'he will never, never leave you, nor forsake you.' The last verse of the cxlv. Psalm seemed a particular favourite with him:

> 'My mouth the praises of the Lord
> To publish cease shall never.'

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He also repeated that verse of the xxxii. Paraphrase:

> 'God is the treasure of my soul,
> The source of lasting joy;
> A joy that want shall not impair,
> Nor death itself destroy.'

The last verse of Addison's beautiful hymn he also often quoted:

> 'Through all eternity to thee
> A joyful song I'll raise;
> For, Oh! eternity's too short
> To utter all his praise.'

After commending his family to God in prayer, he quietly fell asleep in Jesus."

The excellent father and pastor is now no more! Ah! how does this word *no more* harrow up all the tender feelings of the heart! They shall see his face no more: no more shall they hear that voice which, for the space of forty-one years, was accustomed to address them in strains sweet and solemn as those which were heard at Bethléhem when angels shouted, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will towards men." In such circumstances, nature nor Christianity forbids them to feel, nor even to indulge in all the luxury of sanctified grief; but let them not sorrow as those who have no hope—the precious, the worthy, the excellent Mr. Shirreff, their friend, their guide, their comforter, still lives. It was only his inferior part that was shrouded in a coffin, and deposited, with pain and sadness, in the cold earth,

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his better part has sustained no injury. The saint has now entered the realms of light, and there lives, and shall for ever live, in the presence of his God, and in the embraces of his love. All his troubles have fled away, all his wants are supplied; his wishes are all fulfilled, except it may be this one wish, (and here I avail myself of the sentiments of a pious writer,) that the mystery of God may be finished, and all the members of the body of Christ may be raised to the enjoyment of the same happiness with himself. He is dead, but he lives embalmed in the hearts of many; he is dead, but he yet speaketh in the precious doctrines which he taught, in the supplications which he presented to God, and in the pious example which he uniformly exhibited. Happy they who continue in the belief of these doctrines, in the imitation of his holy example, and in the confidence of an answer to such effectual fervent prayers! The God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, shall make them perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in them that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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EXTRACTS FROM DIARY.

Written in his early youth.—O Lord God, unworthy I do desire to take hold of and enter into covenant with thee. These texts bespeak the language of my heart, Isa. xxvi. 13, "O Lord my God, other Lords beside thee have had dominion over me, but by thee only will I make mention of thy name;" Hosea xiv. 3. "Ashur shall not save me, neither will I ride upon horses, neither will I say any more to the work of my hands, ye are my gods, for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy." In the appropriating words of David, I say, Ps. cxvi. 16. "Oh Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds." Again, Ps. xviii. 1, 2. "I will love thee, O Lord my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer—my God, my strength in whom I will trust—my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." Let this be ratified in all ages, and confirmed in heaven; yea, mine own God is he—thy word

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allows me to say so, Ps. l. 7. "I will testify against thee. I am God, even thy God:" thine am I, and on thy side, O thou Son of the Most High. I take heaven, earth and hell, and all in them and about me to witness what I have now done—thine own word binds thee to keep me, and I do hereby bind myself by thy grace to devote myself to thee only, wholly and for ever; all that I am, all that I have, all that is bestowed on me shall be at thy service.

ROBERT SHERRIFF, Amen, amen, and amen.

I would still adhere to these sentiments, and do again say amen unto them. No iniquity is to be found in the Lord.

In another paper, without date, it is written as follows:—Sensible of my deficiencies and daily failings, what can I do but have recourse to the blood of sprinkling—the blood of Jesus that cleanseth us from all sin! Comfortable words! not some sins, not one sin only, but from all sin. He is faithful and just upon our confession to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Lord God I know that thy word is directed to men, and to the sons of men; unto you is the word of this salvation sent. Now since these are thine own words plainly warranting me, amongst the rest of sinners, to apply for salvation, Lord, I do it,—O I do it! and rely upon thee alone for whatever I want—for whatever my needs require. I am a poor tempted harrassed creature, as if there were seven devils in me. But to whom can I go, unless unto thee, Glorious Captain of salvation, who hath vanquished them all in his own person on the cross, and who will, I believe, make me shortly more than a conqueror! Through this assistance, and this only, for I have

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no might of my own, I resolve to fight against all known sins, and practise all known duties. I am thine, and mine eyes are towards thee. I am not able to go out against so great an host. I am not able to perform the duties of my station; but I hope in thy word—thy strengthening, thy supporting word. The great and precious promises of the gospel are the sole foundation of my trust: If it were not these, I should go no farther; but since they are directed to me, I believe, help my unbelief. They are thine own—what doth hinder the accomplishment?—Thou canst not lie, nor alter the word gone out of thy mouth, therefore I will take courage and will bestir myself, not fearing any enemy however strong, nor any lust however violent. Duties too of every kind, and of the most difficult nature, shall all be essayed by me. Nothing being impossible to him that believeth, I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me; with regard to the sacrament before me, I desire to go to it in a holy, humble, believing and rejoicing frame, admiring and crediting the love of God to me, unfolding my necessities, bewailing my sins—the sins of my nature, of unbelief, of pride, of passion, covetousness, and worldly mindedness; now I wish for victory over all these, and that in their stead, the contrary graces may be implanted, increased, and invigorated. In the distribution of the elements I must dedicate myself, my time, my talents, my all, to the service of God, most heartily receiving him as my everlasting God and portion. Now I would ask, O that my requests may be granted! *1st*, The continuance of a communion frame; *2d*, Strength to withstand the violence of my besetting sins; *3d*, Assistance for my work; *4th*, That I may be an ornament to my profession by a humble and circumspect walk

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before men; *5th*, That I may be enabled to fulfil my vows; Lastly, for mercy to my near relations.

1776.—In the first place do I solemnly and most heartily give up myself to the Lord the Saviour, whom I desire to take for my Lord and Saviour, saying with the sweet Psalmist, "I am thine, Lord, save me;" and with the church, O Lord my God, other gods besides thee have had dominion over me, but by Thee only will I make mention of thy name." I abhor the thought, I reject the temptation, which would incline me to entertain a rival to my God in my heart. None in heaven, none in earth, none in all the creation, who may be so much as likened unto Him. How beneficent a friend; how kind a father; how gracious a God; how unspeakable and merciful a Redeemer, who is willing to save me, even me Lord, if my heart deceive me not, and agreeable to my desire! I am willing, (O how willing,) to be saved by thee, utterly renouncing all other things that would usurp this thy work alone; mine eyes are unto thee, O Lord, unto thee only, and I have no confidence in the flesh. Rolling myself upon thee as my only Lord and Saviour, I take thee at thy word, which testifies I am God, even thy God, even thy God. This is spoken unto me, and let me join my hearty Amen unto it; amen, yea and amen. Content, content, O Lord, that thou shouldst be mine and I thine from this time forth and for evermore. With the real desire of my heart, I would bespeak the spouse's language, "My beloved is mine, and I am his;" and as a confirming evidence thereof to myself, I approach his holy table, and over the broken body and shed blood of Jesus his Son, and my Saviour, I call himself, angels, and men to witness, that this I do, believing and hoping that he will grant strength for through-bearing in eve-

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ry trial, and for encountering every difficulty, for resisting every temptatiom, and for performing every duty; and so I approach his presence in this ordinance—at least would desire to do it—loving him as my chiefest joy, delighting in him as my only portion, and mourning for my sins, which are grievous in his sight, and directly contrary to his law. O blessed Lord Jesus Christ, sensible of my own weakness before the very smallest temptation, I give myself unto thee, earnestly beseeching thee to strengthen me for my duty, and against every assault of my enemy—the devil, the world, and my own fleshly lusts. O why should it be thus? I am sure thy words are faithful and true, and cannot be broken, Rom. vi. 14. Isa. xli. 10. 2 Cor. xii. 9. In thy strength I will fight the good fight of faith, and overcome all the enemies who are plotting the destruction of my precious soul, and purpose to abstain from all appearances of evil; particularly from that which doth easily beset me, known to thee and my own conscience. Good and gracious God, keep me, I humbly pray thee, for thy name's sake, and work deliverance for me. O make me such as thou wouldst have me to be.

25th October, 1777.—I R. S. residing at present at C. for as much as I am in some measure sensible of my grievous, horrid, and frequent backslidings from the Lord, since I covenanted with him, to get my soul more confirmed in the Lord, for wading through difficulties betwixt heaven and me with a prospect to the holy ministry, I did in prayer, and now (giving it under my hand) do adhere to all my former covenant engagements to be the Lord's; at this time, I with all my heart and soul do simply resign and give up my-

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self and all my bodily and spiritual concerns unto the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, taking him with heart and soul on these very terms, and no other, upon which he is offered to us in the gospel; hereby engaging in his strength to cleave unto him and his truths so long as I live; before the Lord, the Searcher of hearts, I do with all willingness subscribe this,

ROBERT SHERRIFF.

Samuelston Mains, by Haddington, 30th November, 1777.—Having essayed to confess my sins since I commenced a student of divinity, having likewise begged in prayer to be made a Christian indeed, a lively Christian, a strong believer; having in like manner sought God's gracious presence and assistance in the whole work that may be before me, and having finally sent up some supplications to God for my teacher, my fellow-students, and myself, I did, taking heaven and earth to witness, dedicate myself to God, and, if my heart deceived me not, did receive God my Saviour as God, as my own God, and the God of my salvation, in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; wishing to be his only, wholly, and for ever, in time and through eternity; and willing to be employed in the service of the gospel, to spend and be spent for Jesus Christ, and therefore to go forth in dependence on his sure word of promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in thy weakness. Fear not, for I am with thee;" so looking to Psalm xxvii. 13, 14, I had fainted unless I had believed to see the Lord's own goodness in the land of the living. "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." Viewing these words, I pur-

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pose, through grace, to go on in my Christian course rejoicing; at the same time desiring to wait on the Lord, that he may strengthen my heart, make my way perfect in whatever work I am called unto, particularly the arduous labours of the ministry. In view of which I have been preparing these years past, and must now enter upon trials, in order to be invested with the important and sacred functions. God help me! God bless me! My trust is in the Lord, my confidence is in the mighty God of Jacob, who made heaven and earth. Who of himself is sufficient for these things! Now through gracious aids, I vow and swear unto the Lord that I will deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, even my Saviour Jesus Christ. If I forget Jerusalem, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, let my right hand forget its cunning; yea, what is more, let me be eternally rejected as reprobate silver, and cast unto the bottomless pit. O what is this, what great need for close walking with God, for persevering in prayer for Almighty strength and direction to guide me through every step of my pilgrimage journey! In a word, and upon the whole, let a gracious, an all-wise God, do with me and dispose of me as seemeth good in his sight; let me only be strengthened by him, let me be an eminent instrument in his hand for promoting his glory in winning souls unto the Redeemer; that in the eternal ages, the exceeding riches of his free grace may be displayed in my own and the salvation of many others, turned to the Lord by means of unworthy me. Amen.

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Samuelston Mains, December 20th, 1777.—On the former part of this day I employed myself in confessions and supplications to God, acknowledging my guilt, original and actual, in my infancy, childhood, youth, and riper years; before and after I began the study of divinity; suitably to this exercise, I sung and read a portion of the holy Scriptures. Having done this, I next endeavoured with my whole heart to make a dedication of myself unto the Lord—first as a Christian, to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; then, as a weak, helpless, insignificant creature, who would be willing to serve him with my spirit in the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ; this done, I read and sung suitably thereto; then concluded with prayer and singing again, particularly for direction and assistance in the work before me. I purpose now to give the Lord thanks for his kindness to me, known in so many various ways.

Standard, by Dunbar, his father's house, May 26th, 1778.—Sins grievous and innumerable cleave unto me, and too often prevail against me, of which I have, in some measure, the sad experience; would wish to lament and exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin!" Notwithstanding, I conclude the Lord Jesus hath effectually called me by his grace, upon the following principles: *1st,* I see myself lost as a descendant of Adam, and unable to recover myself, therefore must eternally perish, unless, *2d,* Christ and his salvation were my choice, which, if my heart deceive me not, I think they are. On this ground I stand, on this foundation I build, on this plank I swim into eternity. *3d,* I feel the sins of my heart and of my life grievous to

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me, being odious to God, dishonouring to my Redeemer, and detrimental to my own comfort and happiness. *4th*, The Lord Jesus Christ is precious to me in his person, righteousness, fulness, and grace. *5th*, My heart flows out in love to and desires after communion with him; so that I would wish nothing more in this life than to live by faith upon him, and in fellowship with him. *Finally*, because I wish to be eternally with him, employed in the delightful exercise of praising him, particularly when I taste of his special goodness in the ordinances of prayer, praise, &c. or when wrestling with and groaning under a body of sin and death; then say I, O to be there, where Satan cannot tempt, and sin cannot enter! Shocking thought, to be here and sinning against Christ; let me depart then when God pleaseth, and be with Christ Jesus, which is far, far, infinitely better. But hath God work for me on earth? his will be done. Being now licensed a preacher of the gospel, March 3d, 1778, from that time to the above date, I have been thus employed. Honourable work, a co-worker with God. But have I his call to it, or have I run unsent? The following things are helpful, and persuade me the latter supposition is not the case. *1st*, From my earliest infancy I have been attached unto it, and have been regularly carried on this length in the prosecution of it. *2d*, I have some evidences of a call to it; such as some, although small knowledge, of the doctrines of the gospel; an aptness to communicate this unto others; a will manifesting myself something ready to take on me the preaching of the gospel, excepting objections which arise from a persuasion of my inability for the difficult work; and the call and license of the presbytery to engage in it, however weak and unworthy. Conscious of apparent-

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ly insurmountable obstacles, yet overlooking these, and also my own weakness, I go on in the faith of the promise that God sendeth none a warfare upon their own charges, but that he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Hence I have been hitherto helped. *3d*, God's glory, the Redeemer's honour, and the welfare of his church, I wish to be my leading motives and highest end in what I do, in this way suppressing thoughts which would draw me a contrary way. *4th*, I have been helped to earnestness in prayer with God on this head, either that in providence he would keep me back from, or forward and assist me in this work. *Lastly*, I wish to spend my time and lay out the talents God hath given me in his service, and that of his church. I purpose, therefore, through grace, to go on in the way on which I have now set out, preaching the glorious fame of Christ, and the excellent privileges of his people, with whatever pertains to the ministerial function, with boldness and zeal on all suitable and proper occasions. While writing the above lines, I was struck with a persuasion of my own weakness, and constrained to devolve myself upon the arm of Omnipotence, begging divine assistance in the accomplishment of the promise, Isa. xli. 10, "Fear not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God," &c. Now, O Lord, the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, for these important purposes I devote myself with my whole heart to thee, soul and body, and take hold of thy covenant as all my salvation, and all my desire, (still adhering to my former acceptings; I take Christ as my Prophet, Priest, and King. My Lord, my God, my all, let me be anathema maranatha, if I willingly retract what I have now done. God grant me grace to

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persevere, and each day to perform my vows. O let thy grace be sufficient for me, let the promises of strength and assistance be granted unto me. I can do nothing of myself, and have powerful corruptions within to lead me aside from my God and my duty. Let the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, the grace of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with me; to the name of a three-one God be eternal praises, to which I willingly set my amen, and subscribe my name, ROBERT SHERRIFF.

January 5th, 1779.—On that day I was solemnly set apart to the ministry, and to labour in this place, from that time I have preached here; and, wishing still to continue in this work, I resolve, by the assistance of God, to persevere in the honourable although exceedingly difficult office. My encouragement to form this resolution arises from a conviction of the blessed Jesus having called me to the ministerial work; from the small faith I have in his strengthening promises, often I am tempted to think the Lord will desert me on account of my great wickedness, and leave me to fall into some open and scandalous sin. But O I deprecate it, and pray that I may be kept by the almighty power of God, through faith unto salvation. Ah! the wickedness which lurks within causes grief and anguish of soul. I have the appearance of religion; but, alas! who knows my heart, and the latent corruptions there! Notwithstanding, I, as a sinner, take encouragement from the gracious declarations of a Saviour, "the Son of Man is come to seek and save that which is lost." Again, "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." O this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners,

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even the chief. O how reviving the thought! Such my blessed Lord Jesus came to save. On these grounds I am content. O happy to be an eternal debtor to free grace! I think I am pleased with the method of salvation through Christ, as the best, the most excellent, yea the only way—I wish, I expect salvation no way else. Redemption through Christ! O transporting thought! redemption for me, a lost, guilty, and hell-deserving wretch. O Lord, let me never, never look for it any where but in him; as interested in it, let me go on in the strength of God the Lord. In discharge of my office, sometimes I am led to think that I shall have to quit it as above my talents; but, O Lord prevent it! thou who hast delivered, do thou yet deliver. O let thy grace be sufficient for me, and as my days are, so let my strength be. O how delightful to be preaching the glorious excellencies of Christ, and the peculiar privileges of his people;—let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, let my right hand forget her cunning, if I sinfully cease to publish the renowned fame of Jesus, and the happiness of his people; utterly abhorred be every other thought of my heart; therefore, in strength of God the Lord, I purpose to go on. While writing this, my very heart and flesh crieth out, that God would grant me all necessary gifts and graces for his work, and would remarkably qualify me for the faithful discharge of it. I have preached, so far as I know, acceptably to the public; for which I desire to be thankful, and give glory to God. My final determination is, to go on in strength of the Lord, hoping that he will continue his loving kindness, and perfect that which concerneth me. Amen and amen.

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Tranent, July 30, 1779.—Persuaded of my woful departure from God in heart and life, particularly in that sin which doth so easily beset me, I desire to look unto, and depend on the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, and my God and Father through him for life and salvation, and for support under trials and difficulties of every kind, that I may meet with in my Christian course. Although brought exceeding low by reason of the actual prevalence of iniquities in my heart, yet I will trust in the Lord, with whom there is mercy and plenteous redemption, that he will redeem me from all mine iniquities, and yet help me to triumph over all mine enemies, by giving me the victory in due time. His word cannot be broken; the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet. I will subdue your iniquities, in the faith of which I desire to wait upon the Lord, who is faithful that hath promised. Although filled with doubts and despondencies, yet I trust, through the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, I shall be saved. Hence, as a lost, sinful creature, I do devolve myself upon the Saviour, wishing to account this a faithful saying, and worthy of my acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am a chief one. Just on this I rest.

Tranent, Jan. 1, 1781.—This being the first day of the year, I thought in the morning, while lying in bed, that I would spend part of it in prayer, confession, petition, and thanksgiving; in which accordingly I am now engaged, and find some stirrings of affection: that which particularly lies heavy on my heart, is the prevalence of numberless iniquities against me; the great unconcern and indifference that have seized me, owing to the sensible withdrawment of the blessed

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Spirit in his kindly and gracious influences, (just on his part, deserved on mine;) of this I am conscious to myself, by my lukewarmness in prayer, chiefly secret; by my small outgoings of soul after God in his ordinances, especially in the sacrament of the Supper; by my pride, selfishness, earthly mindedness, and many other ways; alas! how does the reflection gall me. O for his speedy, his gracious return, that I may have fellowship with God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and indeed experience that God is good to Israel, and that the comforts of a life of faith upon the Son of God, surpass in sweetness and excellency whatever else may be desired. Lord I am thine, I take thee as my present, my future, my everlasting portion. With regard to my service in the Gospel of thy Son, Lord make me what thou wouldst have me to be, only grant me grace to serve thee faithfully, and to resign myself to thy will, whether I am called by thee to act in a more narrow or more enlarged capacity in thy Church; not mine, but thy will be done. This I beg may be my attainment to the honour of thy name, through Jesus Christ my Lord, on whose rich and boundless mercy I now devolve myself.

ROBERT SHIRREFF.

August 5, 1782.—Spent some time in prayer, reading, meditation, particularly asking direction in reference to a very important step in life.

Tranent, Nov. 18, 1782.—Employed myself for a short time in prayer and reading, with some thoughts on my present tempted and deserted condition.

Tranent, June 2, 1783.—In view of the sacrament being dispensed by me in this congregation next Sab-

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bath, June 8th, I set apart a few hours of this day for confession of sin, and prayer unto God, entreating him in my own, and in favour of the congregation, with the people in and about this place; affected, although not as I ought to be with this vast indifference and unconcern about serious religion, touched likewise with the very little seeming success of my ministrations among them, I have attempted to represent our mournful situation to God—found some comfort that the work was his, and that he is more earnestly engaged in it than it is possible for me to be; in consequence of which, am convinced that all whom the Father hath given to Christ shall come to him; and since it is his providential will that I should labour in a very barren spot, I would desire to be submissive and resigned, using the means, and leaving the event to God.

June 7, 1784.—Employed a few hours in meditation, prayer, and self-examination with a view towards the sacrament of our Lord's Supper, meant to be observed here on Sabbath first, the 13th of June; perceiving myself a sinner ruined and undone, received comfort by turning my thoughts on the all-sufficiency of Jesus, and the covenant made with Him. I would hope, that notwithstanding prevailing corruptions, disallowed and disapproved of, this Jesus, this God is my God, and will be my guide even unto death, and my portion for evermore, and that covenant all my salvation, and all my desire; at least I would heartily wish it to be so, protesting before God, angels, and men, that I know no other way for my recovery, since the Scriptures assure me that there is not another name by which any sinner can be saved. The Sacrament I would celebrate, because the Lord

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hath made it, and my duty requires of me to profess him before men, and promises spiritual profit to the worthy observers of this ordinance.

Tranent, June 7, 1786.—Fast evening tried to look into my heart. Ah! what confusion and wickedness are there; how prone to trifle in the most important concerns—how vain, how languid and lifeless, yet not wholly without desires after a departing God—just, Lord, on thy part, deserved on mine! O, the sin that dwelleth in me perpetually harasses me, and is often prevailing against me; wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of sin and death! This is my comfort, that I have all in Christ, of whom I would say, yea mine own God is he, in whom I trust to be more than a conqueror. In the exercise of this faith and hope, I dare not disclaim all connexion with him, but O! to be more like him, and more serviceable to Him. Amen.

Tranent, Sept. 4, 1786.—Prayed and meditated for some time this morning: found myself in some degree affected with the seeming unprosperous state of religion in the congregation, and in my own soul;—endeavoured to leave both with the Lord, moaned out my complaint unto him, and expressed my sense of it with a full heart and watery eyes. Although when I compare one year, one month, and one week with another, how these are successively passing on, and yet I am still kept in deep waters, my proud, unbelieving and hasty heart is prone to repine, and to say this evil is of the Lord—why wait any longer? This I condemn as my infirmity, and would rather speak Jeremiah's words: "It is good for a man both to hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Yes,

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let me hope in him—let me believe that he who hath cast me down, will lift me up, although on account of my wretched unbelief, enmity and rebellion, he might justly cast me down to the lowest hell. May the Lord hasten my deliverance in his time! My soul wait thou only upon the Lord;—he only is my rock, and my salvation, and my defence. Proceeding in my plan, am preaching on the application of redemption by the Lord, the Spirit working faith in the heart of the sinner, and inviting him to the Lord the Saviour. O that God the Father, by the concurring agency of the Holy Ghost, would smile on and succeed my poor efforts to serve him with my spirit in the gospel of his Son. In regard of the little good I appear to be doing, I would be humble, diligent, dependent and prayerful. My conviction now seems to be stronger, that it is not by power, nor by might, but by the Spirit of the Lord. A great truth, which I believe and subscribe. ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Jan. 5, 1787.—My ordination day—employed myself for a short while in prayer and meditation; felt neither life nor liberty in these exercises; my desires were, I hope sincere, although not lively. It is now outgone eight years since I was ordained in this place; but ah! how little good have I been the means of doing. Although this seems to be a conviction rooted in my mind, yet my light and obdurate heart is but feebly impressed with it, of which I have had this day and formerly a distressing experience. Notwithstanding, I would desire to bewail before the Lord: while affected with the small effect of my ministrations, was at the same time somewhat desirous that the Lord would much more abundantly countenance and succeed me in them. O that he would ear-

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ly satisfy me and my poor congregation with his mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days;—make us glad according to the days wherein he hath afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. This, with the two next verses, Psalm xc. 14—17. I tried to sing and pray over; I would endeavour to keep myself easy, and trust in the Lord for all. O that this were my attainment, whatever course the Lord takes with me! O that I had the comfort of seeing the pleasure of the Lord prospering in my heart, and in my hand! These I think are my sincere desires; may he who hath given the desire, grant the things desired. Amen.

Tranent, June 6, 1787.—Fast evening, prayed—sung a few lines—read a few verses, and meditated a while on the evils in and about me;—can say little more than observe that my views of them are exceedingly imperfect and indistinct. Yet, from the view I have of them, can perceive nothing but the most absolute need of the Saviour. In me there are deficiencies and pollutions of every kind; but I trust I am complete in him, my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, my redemption, my all. Notwithstanding my baseness and wretchedness, with which I desire to be deeply affected, I would hope my desires are sincere, and from the heart, to be his only as a Christian, and serve him in the Gospel as a minister. Felt this evening some earnestness in respect of these and some other concerns, and prayed that his Spirit and presence may be with me, and with the congregation on the approaching solemnity. O that it may be a time of love, a time of refreshing, and a day of power. My heart's desire is that God's presence may be with us all: It would be a pleasing

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sight indeed to behold Satan's kingdom falling, and Christ's rising and increasing more and more.

Tranent, December, 29, 1787.—In views of a winter sacrament, was helped to some degree of earnestness in prayer for the Lord's presence. Had humbling thoughts of myself, considering it wonderful that the Lord had not thrust me from the pulpit into the pit. O were it his pleasure to favour us in every respect, to give us a season of spiritual revival—but God the Spirit is sovereign and good;—believe and wait—hope and pray.

Tranent, Jan. 28, 1788.—Administered the Sacrament Jan. 20th; the Lord dealt kindly with us in many respects; in several of which I thought I saw a return of prayer. Although I was rather languid throughout, yet not without some solid impressions, and some degree of liveliness, particularly in consecrating the elements, and serving the first table, a deadness seized me at the second table when communicating; however, a sincere desire to be the Lord's, and a hearty willingness to give myself unto him, is, I think, a constant and an abiding principle in my soul at all times. On that text, 2 Cor. viii. 5. "They gave their ownselves to the Lord." I preached two Sabbaths before this sacrament with some satisfaction to myself, and I would hope with some profit to my hearers. O that the blessed Jesus would smile on my poor endeavours, and enable me to be more in real good earnest with my work, and more successful in it. Preached yesterday from 2 Cor. ix. 15. thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift! desirous of stirring up myself and people to gratitude for the Lord's goodness, especially in the instance specified in the

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text, but could not get into the spirit of the doctrine as I wished; however let me be thankful—the Lord is kind indeed, considering what I am, and what I deserve. May my heart be bound with gratitude to Him, warm and everlasting.

Tranent, Feb. 18, 1788.—Set apart some time for meditation and prayer, but ah, my aversion to, and deadness in these exercises! Notwithstanding, I believe it is good for me to draw near unto the Lord. O that in my experience I felt better and better. Reviewing the past part of my life, was sensible there was much ground of humiliation and thanksgiving. Having the prospect of entering into the married state with M. H. attempted to give ourselves unto the Lord, praying that we might be betrothed unto Him for ever in righteousness, in judgment, in loving-kindness, in mercies and in faithfulness. I wish to be kept humble and thankful, and in a close and constant dependence on the Lord. I think all the leading dispensations of his providence towards me clearly designed to make me so;—my own hopes are commonly dashed, and my own plans are usually disappointed before the mercy desired is granted;—according to my little observation and experience, the best wine is brought forth last,—there is first a casting down, and then a lifting up. The counsel of the Lord standeth sure, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps. My only wish is, that all may be for his glory and our good, and as he seems to answer what hath been a matter of concern to me, in this instance, may I speedily obtain it in another—a prosperous congregation; and let me be his humble, faithful and devoted servant for ever. May his grace at all times,

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and in all things, be sufficient for the weak and unworthy writer, who subscribes himself a debtor and dependent for all. ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, April 23, 1789.—Day of public thanksgiving. I consider the mercies of the Lord as very great, and quite undeserved. Lord I am less than the least of them, yet my cup runneth over, and I would humbly hope I have an interest in the great mercy promised unto the Fathers. Can say little more on this head, than just bewail my insensibility and ingratitude; if in some degree I am earnest in praying for the mercies of my heavenly Father, I seldom or never fail in being less fervent in returning thanks for them. Confusion of face belongs unto me, but when my time comes, I shall be what I should be, and do what I ought to do. The present is a state of trial and suffering; the Lord tries me presently, and for some considerable time past, with weakness of mind and nerves, so that his work which I hoped to be the pleasure of my life, and in which I have found cordial delight, is become in a sense a fear, and a burden to me; yet, still employed in it, as I would wish to be, he carries me through it without confounding me before the people, though frequently I feel great inward distress and weakness.

Tranent, Sept. 7, 1789.—I am again plunged into deep waters; the Lord hath exercised me with a sharp trial—the death of my dear wife. Delivered, August 22d, about half-past ten at night, of a daughter, she seemed easy, and in as good a way of recovery as we could desire all that night and next day, till between twelve and one of the following morning, when she was suddenly seized with a dangerous illness of the

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inflammatory kind, which brought on a mortification, that put a period to her life about 10 minutes after 8 of the morning of the 26th of that month. Now when in the dust, I pretend not to do justice to her character; but may say that she was an amiable woman, an affectionate wife, and a sensible companion. I have also good reason to believe that she was an excellent and valuable Christian. Though her superior qualities were veiled with an uncommon degree of modesty, yet they could not be wholly concealed; breaking forth reluctantly on her part, they were, so far as known, admired by all her relations and acquaintances; consequently she was much esteemed by them all. To this the humility of her mind and the sweetness of her natural dispositions contributed, rendering all her excellencies greater and more engaging; but she is now no more.

This and the whole of it hath been an affecting scene to me, but the Lord has not left me without some supporting consolation; he hath borne and carried, and delivered through this Providence, which at a distance would, I think, have overwhelmed me.—It is a hard dispensation, but I confess that it is measured out in righteousness—I desire to get my mind reconciled unto it as the doing of the Lord. The exercises of my mind under it have been various; but I found this a quieting consideration, that God hath done it. Much of his hand appeared in forming the connexion, and in favouring us with mutual comfort the short time it lasted—only about 18 months, and since his hand is as evident in the dissolution of it, let me submit and adore. Have tried to be earnest in prayer, that the dispensation might be sanctified—enabled at times to call the Lord my God with more

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than usual sweetness and fervency, arising from a persuasion that he can prove better to me than the dearest earthly relation, and not without some hope that he will do it; while at the same time I would cast myself, and my poor motherless infant on the riches of his grace, and the care of his Providence, hoping that he will take care of us both, as our new covenant God and Father. During this trying providence, if my heart does not deceive me, I have not thought the worse of God—I have not felt any alienation of love to him, or of confidence in him; rather methinks I would desire to love him more fervently, to cleave unto him more closely, and trust in him more confidently. The Lord will not cast off for ever; but how justly am I and my relations punished in this visitation. I fear we prized the gift more than the giver, the creature more than the Creator. I must condemn myself, and acknowledge that the Lord has afflicted me in righteousness. Yet, blessed God, do not break the bruised reed—do not make a full end of me: O turn unto me, have mercy upon me. Give thy strength unto thy servant, and rejoice me with the smiles of thy countenance. In this dying world I would look to the living Redeemer, and hope, when my time comes, to sit down with all my deceased fellow-Christians in the kingdom of God; but especially to be ever with the Lord, grant it gracious God, grant it. Amen.

Sabbath Evening, Sept. 20, 1789.—Preached this and the two foregoing Sabbaths with some degree of enlargement. Now and then received a smile of his countenance. Commonly I experience both a downcasting and an uplifting every Sabbath, meeting with

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either the one or the other in some part of my work, sometimes in praying, sometimes in lecturing, and sometimes in preaching; but let me be thankful for the smallest mite of mercy, I am unworthy of a crumb. Sitting now in solitude and sorrow, I have attempted to take the Lord for my God. Felt this day in secret prayer a persuasion that *he is my God*, saying, I think with the heart, yea, mine own God is he; felt also a strong desire to be with Christ. Woes me! that I dwell in this land of distance and absence, in this state of sin and suffering; but I will wait till the Lord's time come, hoping to receive from him sufficient grace for performing the duties and bearing the trials of my Christian and ministerial course. My heart yet bleeds when I reflect on the loss I have sustained—I wish I may not offend—I pray that I may not faint in the day of adversity; and I hope that the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who hath loved me, and hath given me everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, will yet comfort my heart, and establish me in every good work,—a text which, besides several others, hath, I think, been of great use to my grieved mind in this time of affliction. Did I but know more of the comforts of religion, I should bewail less the want of temporal joys.

Tranent, Oct. 22, 1789, *the day in August in which my calamity began.*—Have felt very flat to day; thoughts rise forcibly in my mind, and keep alive a painful remembrance of my affliction, which casts an almost perpetual gloom on my spirits. This is my infirmity, let me bewail my attachment to creature comforts, and beg that the Lord would elevate my affections, and enable me to find all in himself; reflecting

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a few moments by myself, I perceive much darkness within, but think it would be the joy of my heart to enjoy fellowship with God in secret, private, and public. Come, my soul, let me encourage myself in the Lord my God; he does all well for thee, and this is enough—I shall praise him yet.

Tranent, November 28, 1789. *My birth-day.*—What important occurrences have fallen out since the day in which I was born!—what mercies, what deliverances, what trials, what distresses, have met in and made up my lot!—what a chequered scene is the present state! I will sing of mercy and of judgment, unto thee, O Lord, will I sing. I was early cast on thy care, thou art my God from my mother's belly; hitherto thou hast borne, and carried, and delivered; I would hope thou wilt continue thy loving kindness till my race, my labours, my years, and my days, are finished. When I reflect on the times which have gone over me, and, in particular, on the revolutions in my lot during this and the preceding year, then I may say, vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Married 29th February, 1788; a child born August 22, 1789, a wife dead August 26; and buried August 29, 1789: what a changing, dying world, true only in its inconstancy and uncertainty! My mind is far from being suitably affected with these providential events, but would hope it is settled in its habitual disposition on the unchangeable God.

Tranent, Dec. 12, 1789.—Ah! what a wretched world, filled with tribulations and deaths; yet, woes me, my soul cleaveth to the dust. Why am I not willing, at the Lord's call, to part with father and mother, wife and child? Religion tells me it is my

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duty, and my judgment assents to it, with a wish it were also my full attainment. Yet corrupt affection recoils, and would retain some will of its own. "If any man come to me," says our Lord, "and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple; and whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Sure, I am not to look for an exemption; let me cheerfully submit to the will of my heavenly Father. If, as presently threatened, I should be again visited with the death of a near relation, forbid, gracious God, I should become hardened under these afflicting dispensations; but grant that I may learn obedience by the things which I suffer; let me rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and continue instant in prayer, hoping that although father and mother, wife and child, and all my earthly relations should forsake me, then the Lord will take me up; so be it. Amen.

Tranent, Dec. 30, 1789.—Spent this day in observing a fast and thanksgiving with the congregation, appointed by the session; felt rather languid and heavy in the public exercises; but blessed be his name that I am not struck dumb, or dead, or confounded, before the people. Surely it is owing to his unbounded and unmerited mercy I am allowed to breathe, to live, to preach. Reflecting by myself in the evening, I would desire to be affected with the providences of God towards the land and church; but think those providences which respect my personal and relative concerns strike me more sensibly. Again visited with another breach, the death of my mother; who, after a lingering illness, which brought on an excessive weakness both of body and mind, expired on the 16th of

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this month. Thus the parents of our numerous family are both laid in the dust. O that my surviving brothers and sisters, and especially myself, to whom God hath spoken once, yea twice, were made to hear the word, and prepared for a blissful immortality! This year is on the verge of expiring: what changes, what revolutions, what marriages, what deaths, have happened in the course of it and the preceding one! three marriages, three deaths, among my nearest relations—a true representation of this world, and of what I am to expect in it. Considering these things, I am ready to bewail my situation here; woes me, that I sojourn in Mesech, and dwell in tents of Kedar! But Lord make me willing to be, to do, and to suffer whatever thou wilt—it is of thy mercies I am not consumed. Let my motherless child live before thee; I beg to be kept from offending thee by anxiety and distrust on her account. Let me sincerely and cordially leave myself and her, and all my concerns, on him who is able to perfect that which concerneth me. This is the point at which I aim; the Lord enable me to reach it. Amen.

Tranent, 26th January, 1790.—Five months to-day since death divided between me and the wife of my youth. This, I hope, was to her better than the day of her birth; to me it is commonly a dull and an insipid day. But why am I so selfish? Let me rejoice in her welfare, and trust that the Lord will provide for and take care of me in my destitute condition. On former occasions he hath dealt wonderfully with me; his arm is not now shortened that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear; cheer up, my drooping spirit, and encourage myself in the power, promise, and providence of the Lord thy God. Ah! that my faith and comfort should be so small in

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proportion to my knowledge and profession. The doctrines of the Gospel are full of consolation at all times, and in all cases. I have often found them so; yet there is too, too frequently, a sorrowful return of fears, jealousies, and distrusts, which I impute to the weak, wavering, and languishing condition of my faith. "If," says the Prophet, "ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." Why overwhelm myself with anxiety, on account of deaths upon deaths, deaths among my friends, and deaths in the congregation. The Lord is telling me that the time is short, that life is uncertain, and that all that cometh is vanity. One of my small charge, an elder, the first breach made in the session, is now lying a corpse. We have been long spared; the Lord hath dealt mercifully with us, preserving those whom I looked upon as the roots and pillars of the congregation; and although death is now begun to cut off these, yet the Head of the church is able to raise up others in their place, and fill up their vacant seats in the meeting. Correct us, but with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring us to nothing; we cannot wish to be altogether unpunished; we may, however, pray that the Lord would not make a full end of us. We have been visited of late with some sharp providences of this kind; let me rejoice that the Lord liveth; when the arrows of death fly so thick around me, and have slain one so near me, what a wonder that I escape! Let the divine patience and long suffering kindness towards me be salvation; let me act in my private, and preach in my public character, as a dying man to dying men. Amen.

Tranent, Feb. 24, 1790. *Evening of the Fast-day.*—If the Lord will, the Sacrament is to be dispensed

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here on Sabbath first. I feel at present very languid, harassed with vain thoughts, vexed with anxiety, distrust, fretfulness, and innumerable evils besides; no hope for me but in the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. This, if I am not deceiving myself, is the anchor of my soul, the ground of my rejoicing, that though I have lain among the pots, yet I shall appear as a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold: were it not for this blood, and the spirit of sanctification, I could not hope for acceptance now, nor any time. Let me look unto the Lord and expect his presence at the approaching solemnity; be of good courage, my soul, his grace is sufficient, and his promise is sure; I am with you always, why art thou then cast down, and what should discourage thee? Is not this enough? The Lord will be my strength and song, and will also become my salvation; so I pray and trust. In this faith I purpose to go on in my Christian and ministerial work.

Since the death of my dear wife this appears a changed world to me; I am presently sitting in solitude and sorrow, but would fain hope my blessed Redeemer hath not left me comfortless. To the praise of the glory of his grace, these words, and this promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," have often in my affliction occurred to my mind, and been supporting to my grieved heart. Happy to find among the papers of the deceased * some containing an account of her religious exercises; was thence prompted to look over some of the same kind, which I had written concerning the exercises of my own mind; found they were written on loose pieces of paper,

* See Appendix.

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some of them hardly legible; thought it proper to write them again; perhaps they may be comforting to myself in some future period, or to some of my most intimate and religious friends, into whose hands they may fall when I am no more with them in this world. If I am not mistaken, God began to deal with me at an early period of my life: though I cannot mention the particular time nor place, nor the instrument by whom, yet have a distant remembrance of hearing the word preached with much satisfaction, and chiefly by that great man of God, Mr. Brown of Haddington. I can also call to mind seasons about the time when I was first admitted to the table of the Lord, when I felt much delight in secret prayer. I think now, that the Lord was then drawing me to himself with the cords of love; from that time to this have often experienced that duty pleasant and comfortable. I can hardly allow myself to think I am deceived in this matter; but if I am, let the good Lord convince me of my error, and O preserve me from going down to the grave with a lie in my right hand. No, Lord, I do, as I have often done, appeal to thine omniscient eye concerning my sincerity in religious matters.

Tranent, March 6, 1790.—Though sometimes forsaken and left in much weakness, and fear, and trembling, yet I serve a good master; though I am guilty of abusing his kindness, and sinning against him in the multitude of his mercies, he is sometimes pleased to grant me an enlivening and refreshing smile. I think my soul experienced something of this kind on the late solemnity, which is truly wonderful, considering my unworthiness, the vanity of my mind, and the coldness of my heart: truth, Lord, yet the

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"dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." To thy great goodness, in providence and in grace, I am indebted for all; a debt which I am allowed to increase, and which I would desire to acknowlege in frequent ascriptions of praise. Amen.

Tranent, March 27, 1790.—Ah! the weakness and wickedness of my heart, how it works incessantly, and prevails almost uninterruptedly in peevish, fretful, vain, and carnal thoughts; these, I think, have been more frequent and forcible of late than ever I felt them before. Alas! I am not what I should be under my affliction, like a bullock unaocustomed to the yoke, or like that King Ahaz, who in his distress trespassed yet more against the Lord. But wherefore is it so? Alas! I have provoked the spirit to depart, and I consider God in righteousness as taking vengeance on my inventions: just, O Lord, yet let mercy rejoice over judgment. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure; have mercy upon me, for I am weak. O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed, my soul is also sore vexed; but thou, O Lord, how long; return O Lord, deliver my soul; Oh! save me for thy mercies sake. My experiences of late seem to me as a commentary on these words, and I think my heart goes along in the prayers which they contain. Though Providence appears to put on a gloomy aspect, and seems to have been frowning on me, both personally and relatively, since the death of my dear wife, yet I would fain encourage myself in the Lord my God, hoping that he will not chide continually, nor contend always, nor cast off for ever. No, no: come, my desponding, my distrustful, my vexed soul, wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, and he will strengthen

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my heart; rejoice in the Lord when ye sit in solitude and sorrow; the time is short—ere long the days of thy mourning shall be ended; this is not thy rest; ye shall have happiness enough in heaven, whither I expect ye shall go, through the grace of the dear, dear Redeemer.

Tremont, April 2, 1790.—Were I to mark my present feelings, I might tell myself, and record perhaps for the perusal of others, that almost nothing else but flatness of spirits, deadness of heart, weakness of faith, strength of corruption, sinful anxiety and distrust, with innumerable other evils are to be found with the unworthy writer;—behold I am vile, let me abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. So far from becoming more patient and resigned to the will of God in the late awful visitation of his providence, I seem to myself as if I were growing more proud, more fretful, and more discontented. My solitude feeds my sorrow, and my sorrow tends to increase and strengthen these evil tempers. But, my God, (for nothwithstanding all my baseness and vileness, I cannot think of renouncing my claims, and I trust he will not disown me,) wherefore is it thus with me? Ah! it is my own wickedness correcting me, and my backslidings reproving me. I will not be right as long as I remain in this wretched world, and carry about with me a body of sin and death; pained with the evils of it, and the many causes of uneasiness in this unhappy state of existence, I think I have good reason to call frailty happy, death desirable, and to look on immortality with an ardent heart; but, Lord, I wish to be at thy disposal, and to wait thy time. I would only desire of thee that my strength may be equal to my day of service and suffering, and that

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Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death. I have reason, however, to fear that my sentiments at present on the vanity of the world and poorness of this life, may perhaps arise more from the weak and gloomy state of my mind, than from a solid, judicious, and scriptural persuasion. After all my tossings, return, O my soul, to thy rest, it may be the Lord will be gracious: turn my mourning into dancing, and gird me with gladness. Desiring it may be so, and trusting it shall be so here or hereafter, or both, I am thine, ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, May 8, 1790.—Providence is still threatening and punishing;—have lost this week one of the most valuable members of this session and congregation. I have esteemed him as such since my acquaintance with him, and from the same period have often found much comfort and encouragement in conversation with him. Taking this in connection with other late visitations of Providence, I think the Lord hath a controversy with us. Our small number is reduced; and, alas! no promising appearance at present of others coming in to supply their place. This bears hard upon me. Prone to doubt the promise and distrust the providence of my God, weak in mind, and weaker still in faith, my situation seems very distressing. Bereaved of an affectionate companion at home, and of a trusty confidant in the congregation, I may say, lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness; yet, blessed be God, I am not left wholly destitute and friendless, nor entirely without hope. Perhaps at evening time it may be light; the Lord my God may enlighten my darkness, and render my latter end more prosperous

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than my beginning; let me therefore trust in him in relation to all my personal, family, and congregational concerns—the Lord will provide. In the meantime, I conceive it to be my duty to wait, to believe, and to pray; to be particularly earnest for an increase of faith and patience, that in patience I may possess my soul, and believing, may rejoice in Christ, who is given to be Head over all things unto the church, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Lord, do what thou wilt in relation to me, only grant me the seasonable and effectual supplies of thine own spirit. Amen.

Tranent, May 26, 1790.—Nine months to-day since my connection with —— was broken by death, during which time I have been in deaths oft—deaths more frequent and distressing (my father's excepted) than any which have affected me in any former period of my life. The word of God mentions a day of adversity, my lot seems to be made up chiefly of days of this kind. Let my soul rejoice! Reflecting that the Lord sees that sorrow is better for me than laughter, mourning than joy, adversity than prosperity. Let me be encouraged and supported, the Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, to all generations. The text on which I preached last Sabbath; there is enough in it; let me not cast away my confidence; let me humbly submit, patiently endure, and quietly wait, till I see the end of the Lord. Why should not I be willing to be any thing or to be nothing. I have reason to be thankful that through grace I have been enabled to retain something of a character as a Christian and a minister. Lord support me in this season of personal

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and relative trials, grant me the sanctified improvement of them; help me to wait on thee in the way of thy judgments, and to live in the faith and hope of the Gospel, casting all my Christian and ministerial cares on thyself alone. Amen.

Tranent, June 21, 1790.—O, if I could encourage myself in the Lord my God! My discouragements seem numerous and increasing; they press on my mind, which is wounded and broken: if they are continued, let grace enable me to bear them, and to wait patiently on the Lord for the sanctified improvement of them. I am ready to say in my haste, all these things are against me; but why consult with flesh and blood? Let me believe in the Lord my God, so shall I be established; yet may I not observe with Job, are not my days few? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little. There is ground to hope in the darkest cases: the high and lofty one who dwells with the humble and contrite, hath said, "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." Be comforted, be encouraged, O my soul! and trust that all these things shall be for thy profit. Be this my faith, my hope, my joy. Amen.

Tranent, July 22, 1790. *Fast evening.*—Since this time last year, what affecting changes have taken place in my family and congregation, and among some of my nearest relations: But thou, "Lord, art the same, and thy years have no end." Let this be my consolation, in respect of past, and in views of approaching alterations. The fashion of this world passeth away,

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why am I not weaned more from it? Why is not the future world more in mine eye and affection? Still my soul would cleave to the dust. Considering with myself, I see and am persuaded that in myself I am poor, blind and naked; but my persuasion is equally strong, that I have light, life, and righteousness in Christ. Felt, I thought, in prayer some warmth of affection in giving myself to and accepting of Christ as my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Some sincerity in praying for my poor infant, whom I desire also to give back unto the Lord. The congregation was likewise in my thoughts, that the Lord who hath broken us with breach upon breach, would repair these breaches, and make with us at this time a feast of fat things. Since my own trial in August last, what heavy trials by deaths in the congregation! The Lord has done it; let me submit in silence, and wait in patience, till he explains his doings, that I may not offend as I have done. I would wish to be more deeply impressed with the divine sovereignty over me, his propriety in me, and right to do with me according to his own pleasure. In relation to this sacrament, my heart's desire and prayer is, that the Lord may be with me, with his servants, and people. I would go to the table, and to the pulpit, and house of my God, waiting, hoping, depending, and trusting in him, that my heart may be warmed, my soul comforted, my Redeemer honoured, and my God glorified. Although vile and unworthy, let me, let all, be favoured and accepted—let the Master of the feast be with us —Grant it. Amen.

Tranent, August 25, 1790.—This is the morning of that day in the week last year which dissolved the

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short-lived connection between me and M. H. the occurrences of which, and the surrounding days, are fresh in my recollection, and painful to my mind. Although I remember them, and am afflicted with them, yet I am afraid I do not improve them as becometh a Christian. I feel dull and melancholy; when, if suitably exercised, I should rejoice in the Lord; but he knoweth my frame, he remembereth I am dust. In every thing I fail. Have some idea of what I should be, and some wishes to press forward; but, ah! I come far short; Lord help me, let me serve thee while I live—make me ready for my change—prepare me for a happy immortality—that to me to live it may be Christ, and to die it may be gain. Such is my desire and my hope.

Tranent, Dec. 30, 1790.—Since my last writing these notes, have much to record of the divine goodness. Have gone out, and come in, have preached at home and abroad—hitherto hath the Lord helped me. O that I were enabled to praise my great preserver, my kind Master, my gracious God! But, ah! what I would, I do not. I feel a desire to serve the Lord; this, I hope, is always sincere, sometimes fervent. It were well for me to be better acquainted with the pious effusions of the gracious soul; Lord increase them, and let me rejoice in hope of a time when I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and be satisfied with thy likeness. This day was observed as a fast in the congregation; prayed in the morning with some ease and readiness, but preached for the most part with difficulty and confusion. The Lord is Sovereign! Often I am most at a loss when I least expected it. Let this teach me to be always diffident of my own

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preparations, and influence me to go to the pulpit in a humble dependant frame of mind. Since the public services of the day were finished, I have been essaying the duties of consideration, confession, and supplication; but, alas! I attained not to any degree of fervour in them. I attempted, however, as a vile creature, to give myself, my family, my flock, unto the Lord. What can I do? where can I go? upon whom can I rely? all refuge fails me—there is none that can take effectual care of my soul—wherefore I will cry unto the Lord, I will say unto him, thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living. I would likewise desire to accept of him as the God of my child; trusting and praying that he will be my God, and the God of my seed—so be it, O Lord. Another year is on the point of leaving me. Reflecting on the events of it, I see a diversified scene of mercies and judgments, of comforts and crosses, of smiles and frowns. Considering all the way by which the Lord hath led me in the course of my pilgrimage, let me set up a stone, and call the name of it Ebenezer, saying, hitherto hath the Lord helped me. Pensive and thoughtful, broken in heart, and wounded in spirit, mine eyes are unto thee, O God, thou givest power to the faint, and to them that have no might thou increasest strength. Having these promises, why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou not always triumphing in Christ Jesus?

Tranent, Feb. 21, 1791.—In dependence on God, let me cast away my fears, and rejoice all the day. Alas! that I should be so fearful, so distrustful, so unbelieving; this may be owing in part to the weak and wounded state of my mind; but the Lord who

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knoweth my frame will not, I hope, break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Let me encourage myself in the Lord my God, believing that in the day when I call upon him, he will draw near unto me, and say, fear not. Our Fathers trusted in him, and he did deliver them; he will be the same to their believing children, none of whom shall be confounded. How precious the word of God—how suitable in all cases—how pertinent to mine! Believing it, let me rejoice in hope that the Lord will be my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer. The Lord work all his work in me, make me a shining Christian, a successful minister, and a lively expectant of the glory which shall be revealed. Amen.

Tranent, May 9, 1791.—I would desire to cast myself, in all my personal and relative concerns, on the mighty God my Saviour,—my precious soul, my child, my family, my flock, and my friends; and Oh! that I might be enabled to do so with the heart, that whatever the Lord means to do with me in his providence, I may cheerfully submit. Yet, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do, my trials have come in the course of thy providence, support me under them, let me not fall before them; give me animal spirits, but especially an abundant supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ, particularly when I feel frequently so much a want of the former. Let me wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, hoping he will yet strengthen my heart.

Tranent, July 28, 1791. *Fast evening.*—Sitting and meditating by myself, what says my conscience to the following questions: What evidences have I

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that I am Christ's? He is, I think, precious to me. Upon what ground do I stand? upon the sure foundation which God has laid in Zion. What are my ends in remembering Christ's death? that this command of his may be obeyed, and that my poor soul may be filled as with marrow and fatness. What should be my exercise at the table of the Lord? resigning myself unto him, and casting all my cares upon him, temporal, spiritual, personal and relative, for time and eternity. What petitions shall I present? that my carnal mind may be spiritualised, that my perverse temper may be rooted out, that my will may be subdued, that my trials may be sanctified, that grace may be given to support under them, and that I may be enabled to wait on the Lord in the exercise of faith and patience till deliverance is vouchsafed. I would hope such are my views and sentiments; Lord, perfect that which concerneth me. I am poor and needy—think upon me—thou art my help and my deliverer—make no tarrying, O my God! Let thy work be the delight of my soul, and the mean of much good to the souls of others. Amen.

Tranent, November 28, 1791.—This is the day on which I was born, O that it may be as the beginning of days unto me, the Lord renewing my days as of old, and causing me to sing as in the days of my younger years; with my soul, and all that is within me, I would bless the Lord, and say of him, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in him will I trust." Cast down at times I am; cast off, I trust, I never am, nor ever shall be; for I take this promising God to be my God for ever and ever, and my guide even unto death. With him also I would entrust my child, my family, my flock; as to my per-

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sonal concerns, I leave them with him, desiring and hoping that he will perfect that which concerneth me. Lord, thy mercy lasteth for ever! Let my shadow of death be turned into the morning; let me be strengthened with might, and rejoice as a strong man to run a race. Thus may it be with him, who, though unworthy of the name, subscribes himself the Lord's servant for ever. ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Feb. 14, 1792.—Providence hath been visiting me with a fresh trial—inflicting the small-pox on my child. I have yet cause to praise God this affliction hath been tempered with much mercy; now there are some appearances of its removal. O the goodness of God! he knows my frame, and does not suffer me to be tempted above what I am able to bear. But ah! my own weakness, I am hasty and distrustful, as if I were afraid he was deficient in wisdom and goodness to manage all our concerns. It ought to be a wonder to me that he does not bring my fears upon me. Let me bewail my unbelieving anxiety, and regret my want of faith in the promise, and trust in the providence of God—Lord help both. We have the prospect of a sacramental solemnity on the first Sabbath of March ensuing. In some degree sensible of my need, I would desire to wait on the Lord for every thing, as a Christian and a minister. In both respects I would hope that my God will supply all my needs by Christ Jesus. Amen.

Tranent, Feb. 29, 1792. *Fast evening.*—My heart is hard, my thoughts are vain, my affections are cold; this, alas! is too much my situation; but it is not to be rectified by staying from God; I will therefore go to him, crying, Lord circumcise my heart, establish my

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thoughts, and warm my affections by a live coal from the altar. I would take notice that this is the day on which my short time in the married state commenced in the year 1788. Oh! the vanity of life, and the uncertainty of human friendships. Lord, betrothe me unto thee for ever. Amen.

Tranent, June, 11, 1792.—Preached yesterday on the Christian's triumph over death. My desire is, that the truths spoken may be the faith and the food of my own soul at all times, particularly at that trying period. Have much work before me; I desire to prepare for it, and to go through with it, looking to the Lord for direction, assistance, and acceptance. Although seldom very lively in my addresses to God, yet my persuasion of the need in which I stand of his presence is, I think, constant and firm. The question is, do I belong unto the Lord? Yes, Lord, I am thine; I have often said it before, I repeat it again, and will adhere unto it living and dying. Let me then hope that my Lord will be with me to perform all things for me, till he hath perfected that which concerneth me. In views of sacramental solemnities, I renew my claim, and desire that a sincere and lively hope of promoting the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the good of souls, may animate me in the whole of my conduct; to these let me add the hope of getting something for myself. O it were desirable to have the Lord working with me, in and by me, that my heart being lifted up in the good ways of the Lord, I may run my race of service and suffering with pleasure and perseverance, till I have finished my course with joy. Come then, my soul, trust a faithful God, rejoice to do his will, and continue hoping unto the end. Why art thou cast down? wherefore do ye

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doubt? The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever. Amen.

Tranent, August 27, 1792.—It is my desire, but, alas! far from being my attainment, to be suitably affected with the doings of the Lord. O that I could remember in a Christian manner, and for Christian purposes, all the way which the Lord my God hath led me in this wilderness. It were very desirable to have the carnality and corruption of my affections removed, the hardness of my heart softened, and the obstinacy of my will subdued, that, pleased with the ways of God, I might rejoice in all his works. Notwithstanding that deadness and depression which lie on my mind, sin stirs and prevails; I hope I may say it is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me. There is, I trust, a principle within which maintains the ascendancy of my heart; and when at any time it is overpowered, as, alas! it is too frequently, I consider myself as led captive by the law of sin which is in my members. Let me wait, and look, and long for deliverance, and give thanks to God in expectation of the victory at last.

Tranent, Nov. 19, 1792.—I have much reason to be thankful—was carried through my late services with ease, and frequently with inward feeling and satisfaction; to the praise of sovereign grace, be this written and recorded. Notwithstanding the conviction of my mind that all is owing to the goodness of the Lord, yet my vain heart would lift up itself. Hence my proud and self-flattering thoughts, which, though concealed from men, are manifest to God, and not unknown to myself. I need humbling dispensations, and I get them. The services of yesterday

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were, in the main, very tasteless and insipid to me, neither pleasing me while I was employed in them, nor satisfactory to my reflection. I see no truths impress the heart, without the energy and operation of the Lord the spirit. Alas! that I should resist and grieve him at any time, and so provoke him to withdraw from me. O to be filled with him at all times, and forsaken by him at none, then spiritual exercises would be my delight.

Tranent, Feb. 20, 1793.—To-day we have been employed in the exercise of fasting, having the prospect of the sacramental supper on Sabbath first. Felt rather languid in praying, yet not altogether without some fervour heard concerning the stony heart; felt as I may always feel, a proof of the hardness of my own heart. Now, with my present views, I ask myself what are the evidences of my faith; do I believe on the Son of God? He is the object of my trust, I resign myself unto him, I accept of him, I am well pleased with him, and desire to serve him. I ask myself again, what are my needs which I would wish to have supplied? that the Lord would grant me an increase of grace, strength for duty, victory over my corruptions, support under my trials; and so far and so soon as he thinks proper, deliverance out of them. Further, I ask myself what are my plagues? Ah! a carnal heart, including the basest, the vilest, and the most wicked inclinations; and these of every sinful kind, known to the Lord, and not unknown to myself, painful on reflection; but this is all my support, that Christ came to save sinners. As to the work before me, I desire and hope the Lord will be gracious —*He is a tried stone.* I am encouraged by his help on former occasions—I trust he will not deny me on

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this. O to be enabled to tell the church that Christ is all in all, and to find it so in my experience, that, like an angel, I may be all love and life in his service! The above is the action sermon text.

Tranent, Sept. 21, 1793.—I have much reason to lament over my weakness and wickedness. I must commit myself wholly unto the Lord; there is no possibility of standing but as upheld by him. O that I may be kept from fainting and falling, and enabled to maintain my hope and confidence in his word. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright, he knows all my days, and I trust will be with me until the days of my mourning be ended. Let me be of good comfort; if he denies me some things, let me try to find all in himself. I would be submissive to his will. O that he would endow me with a humble, patient, and submissive spirit, that I may be resigned in every thing; though this time may seem long, yet it is my duty to wait. He hath done well for me in past periods of my life, I hope he will continue his loving kindness; his hand is not shortened that it cannot save—he is always the same.

Tranent, October 4, 1793.—Reflecting a little on the ways of providence, I find my heart far, very far, from being suitably affected with them. I have to lament the want of a kindly and cheerful submission to the will of God. Nevertheless, I see and do acknowledge that the most painful of his dispensations are mingled with mercy. O to be pleased with every thing as the doing of the Lord; let me aim at this attainment; let me, like the poor woman in the Gospel, press through the crowd of lusts within me, and devils without me, to get to Christ; and having got

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to him, let me stay myself upon him, in hope he will cure my plagues, forgive my sins, and save my soul. At the same time, I would acquiesce in his disposals respecting all that concerneth me with calmness and composure. May this be ever satisfactory to my mind, that all things are of God. Surely there is enough for my comfort in this consideration: "would to God it were always fresh, and always powerful, to the soul of him who desires to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

Tranent, Nov. 4, 1793.—Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, &c. then shall the Lord be my God." In like manner, hoping that the Lord will be with me, and will keep me in the way of duty, I embrace him as my God, and surrender myself and all I have to his service; trusting in his power and promise, I go forth to duties and difficulties, to work and warfare. Let me stay myself upon the holy One of Israel in truth; none perish that him trust. With David, my prayer is, "uphold me according to thy word, that I may live, and let me not be ashamed of my hope; anoint me with fresh oil, and let my tongue be like the pen of a ready writer. Have finished the Christian armour on Eph. vi. 10—19. Began these discourses in October last year, and concluded them on the last Sabbath of the same month this year. May the Lord impress them upon us all, that we may overcome all. Amen.

Tranent, Dec. 26. 1793.—In the course of this year, to the above date, the ways of providence have been much in an uniform strain: No remarkable change has

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fallen out in my lot; my little family and congregation remain without any extraordinary alteration—blessed be God for his mercies to both. O let us live, and our souls shall praise thee! My little one, and all the souls of my small charge, I cast upon thee. With regard to myself, I am thy servant, let me never be a discredit to a master so great and so good; come what may in the subsequent period of my poor life, I purpose to adhere to thee, and to thy work; if my trials and temptations are continued, let me experience the power of Christ, that out of weakness I may be strong. Thankful would I be for the divine goodness—humbled lower than the earth it becomes me to be on account of my own unworthiness; yet I trust that I have some good hope through grace that the Lord will bear, and carry, and deliver me, and shew me at last his salvation. Amen.

Tranent, March 5, 1794.—We have again been privileged with our sacramental communion on Sabbath last. I was supported and upheld by the good hand of God upon me. The Lord does not give me much sensible comfort in my work; at times, however, I felt what I spake, and was impressed about the close of the service, in communicating, with this pleasing thought, that nothing should separate between Christ and my soul. Have much reason to mingle thanksgiving with humility: let me praise the Lord for all his mercies—let me go softly all my days. Providence takes every method to keep down my pride, and to teach me humility. O that I may learn the lesson, and go through the chequered scene, leaning and staying myself on the mighty One. The Lord does not seem to give me much success; perhaps the prophecy and promises relative to the people being ga-

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thered to Shiloh, may be fulfilled when I am not looking for it, or when I am no more in this world. Gen. xlix. 10. which was the action sermon text. I think my desire is to see sinners gathered to the church, and to the Saviour; and O that I could labour more abundantly, and pray more fervently, for the accomplishment of this object. Amen.

Tranent, May 12, 1794.—Woes me, for the confusion and carnality of my mind, and the deceit and corruption of my heart—plagued with the operations of indwelling sin, and harassed with the buffetings of Satan. My case is very distressful; what if the Lord should let loose these enemies upon me; I feel my own inability to withstand them, and have been often, often overthrown by them; the effects of which appear in cooling my fervour, deadening my graces, and damping my spirits. Yesterday furnishes me with a recent proof; my services were heavy and oppressive to me, and sometimes I thought to have sunk under them: nevertheless, the Lord held me up, and I trust will do, for his own glory, the credit of his ordinances, and the good of his people. My convictions of baseness, vileness, guilt, and unworthiness are such, that I abhor myself, and confess that the people of God, if they knew me, and God, who perfectly knows what is in me, might justly abhor me too. In this case, I roll myself upon the pardoning grace of God, crying, with the poor publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and acknowledging with Paul, "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. On these words I rest myself, desiring to believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ I shall be saved. In

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the mean time, let me look to him for light, liberty, and enlargement. O that he would shew me the way in which I should walk, and lead me in it. O that he would give me rest from my fears, and my sorrows, and my hard bondage. Amen.

Tranent, July 30, 1794.—Sabbath last we kept our solemn feast—preached from Psalm cxxx. 8. The Lord in unmerited kindness made the truths of his word pleasant to my soul; felt, I thought, freedom in preaching, warmth in praying, and some softening in communicating. O that I could prove myself grateful! Let me walk humbly with my God—may he retain on the imaginations of the thoughts of my heart savoury impressions. What my public ministrations are to others, it is not for me to determine; but so far as observable, they are not accompanied with much effect at present. Providence does not make any remarkable addition to our numbers, neither are we suffered to decrease. For some years past the communicant roll has contained just about 200 souls, never exceeding, to my knowledge, 205. Considering the little handful at our beginning, (56 members,) with other providential obstructions, I must not despise the day of small things. If the Lord means that others should increase and I must decrease, let me be silent; yet there is in my mind a sort of feeling that forbids me to draw a desperate conclusion. May I not adopt the mode in which Manoah's wife reasoned: If the Lord were pleased to make an end of us, he would not have received any service at our hands, neither would he have shewed us such things, nor told us of them? He keeps us down, but he does not destroy us; he leaves us in perplexity, but not in despair—who can tell but the Lord may yet be gra-

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cious! May I obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I purpose, through his grace, to cleave to him amid discouragements, and to hope in his mercy for all things. Let me be on my guard against evil tempers; let me study purity of heart, and holiness of conversation; having opened my mouth unto the Lord, let me never go back. The Lord keep me and bless me—the Lord be gracious unto me, and make his face shine upon me—the Lord lift up his countenance upon me, and give me peace. Amen.

Tranent, June 15, 1795.—Come, my soul, let the abundant mercy of God encourage thee to hope in him, and to wait for him—the Lord will not cast off for ever. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Death, I trust, will be a deliverance to thee from all that is distressing and perplexing; it may be that even in life the Lord will enlighten thy darkness, remove thy fears, and convert thy sorrows into joy: at any rate, maintain thy hope in God—cease from man, but rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. Amen.

Tranent, July 27, 1795.—I write myself a debtor to God—I cannot discharge my debt—I am allowed to increase it—I desire to sink deeper into it. He hath done much for us on this sacramental occasion; he favoured us all yesterday in providence, and I hope many of us in grace. When I think of my perverseness, my carnality, my pride, my passion, my ingratitude, and all the other innumerable evils which compass me about, it may strike me with astonishment that ever he should look on such a dead dog as I am. O the sovereignty, the freedom, and the riches of his grace! It pains me to

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the heart to think that ever I should offend him. I must return again to the field of battle, not without some hope that he will be with me, and lead me on to victory and peace. The Lord will bring me forth into a large place, and deliver me, because he delighteth in me. In the mean time, let me be thankful; let the high praises of God be in my mouth, and a two-edged sword in my hand. Notwithstanding my difficulties and discouragements, I would persuade myself that the Lord will not suffer his own cause to perish. O that the glory of the Lord may be revealed amongst us; and that we, and all flesh, may see it together! (Action sermon text yesterday, Isa. xl. 5.) my desire is, that this work, which is of God, may be established till his glory becomes the fulness of the whole earth. Amen.

Tranent, Dec. 23, 1795.—The frame of my mind hath been dull and languid for some Sabbaths of late, chiefly in the afternoon. I have come in quite dissatisfied with myself; the word of God was powerless when delivering it, and inefficacious when reflecting upon it—my folly makes it so. I cannot tell what foolish imaginations, wandering desires, empty thoughts, and a thousand vanities of a similar nature, do possess me: I trust they are disallowed, and condemned as unwelcome intruders; yet I fear they are the sinful occasions of the divine withdrawment, and of my consequent deadness. I would gladly be rid of them, and cry, "Lord, how long shall vain thoughts lodge within me?" Who of my Christian acquaintances that see me would suppose that I have such a heart? "Create in me a clean heart, O God." Perhaps another important change may take place in my lot; but I pray that no such thing may ever

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happen without the divine countenance and concurrence—the Lord manage for me in all things. Amen.

Transent. Feb. 18, 1796. *Fast evening.*—Christianity is a truly rational work; its seat is in the soul; it is produced and preserved by the power of God; nothing less can keep religion alive in us, so many are its opposers. As to myself, I feel such opposition to what is good, that I am convinced nothing but the exceeding greatness of divine power can enable me to overcome it. I see that the same power is needful for assisting me in the whole course of my Christian and ministerial warfare. Such is the weakness of my hands, and the weight of my duties, that my only resource is the omnipotence of God, exercised in strengthening the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees. I think I am not without trust in God; nor shall all my fears and foes undermine it. Although not affected as I should be with my sins, yet my convictions tell me that there is no hope for me but in God my Saviour. I ask mercies of the God of heaven, that he would smile upon us on this occasion: I go to him for light and direction, for comfort and help, for peace and pardon, and for all salvation. O that my heart may be enlarged in his service, and my lips opened in his praise; that with ease and with earnestness I may publish his pre-eminence to my fellow men. (Col. i. 18. intended action sermon text.) My heart says amen; and may the Lord my God say so too.

Transent, May 24, 1796.—The Lord continues his loving kindness—it becomes me to be thankful, blessed be God. I look to him, that the conjugal relation now established may be sweetened and sanctified;

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nothing but his presence and blessing can render us comfortable. I would likewise have my eyes towards him for direction, assistance, success, and every thing else in my private and public relations. I would not wish to tempt and to prove him, after having seen his works, and experienced so much of his kindness; I would put my trust in him, and wait upon him, for what in the course of his providence is best for me, at all times, and in all things. I stand much in need of that wisdom which is profitable to direct—of that faith which will enable me to believe—of that trust which will dispose me to depend, and of that patience which will enable me to wait. The Lord work in me both to will and to do of his good pleasure; and ordain personal, family, and congregational peace for me. Amen.

Tranent, August 8, 1796.—I have only to say in general, that God does not appear any way remarkably for us; yet he does not seem to have forgotten us altogether: he keeps our small congregation together, but does not give any great accession to our number. I would walk on in the path of duty, still trusting a faithful God; all events are in his hand—he will give that which is good. I think I would willingly do any thing in the service of Christ; and feel a desire that my sphere of usefulness were enlarged. O what shall I, what can I do, for him who gave himself for me! All is less than nothing. Was carried through my work on Sabbath was eight days; preached and heard on that occasion abundance of precious and useful truths. The Master of assemblies fix them as goads and nails in our heart: alas! that they should ever be forgotten by us; keep them, O Lord, for us—may we live habitually under the impression of

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them—and may our profiting appear unto all men. Amen.

Tranent, Nov. 28, 1796.—The above is the day of the month in which Providence brought me into the land of the living; hitherto I have been preserved; the Lord hath dealt kindly with me in respect of bodily health and outward circumstances; my cup hath been well supplied, I have had food and raiment as the fruit of my own labours under the favour of God; and as much vigour of body and mind as has enabled me to discharge the duties of my office in some poor measure. I have not been laid aside from my public services a single Sabbath since I entered into the ministry; this I record to the praise of providential goodness. Encouraged by the past, I purpose to go on for the future. I would say with David, "because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live; because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." God grant me fresh and plentiful supplies of his grace for every day, month, and year of my short life. Continue to uphold me, renew my strength, increase my zeal, and render me more lively, more active, and more successful in thy work. It consists with the promise on which I hope, and by which I am encouraged, "Lo, I am with you always." Amen. So prays the writer, ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Nov. 10, 1797.—Blessed be God, "he is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation." I do not always feel enlargement in his service; but he does not deny me that assistance which is necessary to help me on in it with external decency and respect. I must not be ungrateful; it is given

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to me at times to speak with ease, with liberty, and with earnestness. I have found it good for me to draw near unto God, and do now set to my seal, that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness and peace; I have often returned home dissatisfied with the company of friends and acquaintances; but to me it is ever a pleasing feeling and a satisfactory reflection when I enjoy something like the presence of my God in the ordinances of his grace. Even when he does not smile, I see it to be my duty and my interest to lament after a hiding God. I will trust in him, and live more as a sojourner in a strange land, desiring a better country, and looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Amen.

Transent, Feb. 19, 1798.—How happy is that man whose life is a life of fellowship with God, and of faith on the Son of God! How pleasantly my days pass on when I feel myself supported and comforted by the God of all consolations. In this case, I make little of all the ills of life, I bear them easily, I press through them with resolution, and look forward with hope and joy. O that this were more frequently my attainment; but I am in the body and in the world; the morning cometh, and also the night, let me be thankful for both; the former preserves me from sinking into despair, the latter prevents me from being exalted above measure. The divine dispensations are all in wisdom and goodness—I hope to praise him yet for them all. In the mean time, let my soul take up her rest in God, and wait on him, whether he smiles or frowns. Amen.

Transent, May 16, 1798.—What is the world? a vanity, a dream, a delusion. How eagerly is it pur-

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sued, how quickly is it gone! Witnessed on the 14th inst. the interment of a brother, who, after being abroad for 18 years, came to this country in March last, reduced in body to a mere skeleton; he languished for a few weeks, and died on the 9th curt. What solemn reflections may this providence suggest to me, and the remaining branches of my father's family! How vain is the life of man—how passing the glory of the world—how unavailing the riches of the east or west—how effectual the progress of disease—how irresistible the stroke of death! My soul, cleave not to the dust, seek durable riches and righteousness—lay up for thyself treasure in heaven—be rich towards God—live in the hope of a crown of glory, and rejoice that the Lord hath said unto thee, "I am thy God." I have many friends still, so far as is known, eight brethren and sisters; which of this number shall be next summoned out of time into eternity is determined by God—may he make us ready. "O that we were wise, that we understood this," &c. Alas! that any of us should seem destitute of the grace of God—but who can tell!

Tranent, 12th June, 1798.—It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God. The God whom I serve is rich and liberal; his perfections, his promises, his ordinances, and his providences, are wells of salvation, always full, always flowing. Blessed be God, that at times his people draw water out of them with joy. The Israelites encamped at Elim, where there were wells of water and palm trees; the saints dwell in the house of God, where there are abundance of good things. If we receive some refreshment by the way, let us adore the sovereign kindness. It is our privilege to enjoy or-

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dinances, and blessed be God for them. They are not wells without water, nor clouds without rain; sometimes they drop abundantly on gracious souls, and, operating like rain on the mown grass, they render them like a field which the Lord hath blessed. This the writer felt, and desires that his feelings were more frequent and impressive. His request to God is, that his Redeemer may be honoured. He laments that he should have so little ability and confidence to speak for the honour of the Redeemer. He often hears with dissatisfaction and disgust much idle conversation, and either talks apart in it, or sits silent, but has not the courage to restrain it. Let me labour, and strive, and pray, that his power may work in me mightily; let me make a sacrifice of my honours, my character, my ease, and my years, for his sake; let me trust to him for what is best for me in all things. He hath said, "them that honour me, I will honour."

Tranent, 26th July, 1798. Fast evening.—Have felt this day much stirring of corruption; vexing thoughts and disquieting cares have preyed upon my mind, and rendered me very uneasy. In my very outset, my God seemed to forsake me, so that I could neither preface nor pray with any degree of satisfaction to myself. But wherefore hath it been so? the causes are many and mournful. My heart condemns me in point of carelessness, carnality, pride, peevishness, and discontent. Woes me, my God! I pour out my complaint unto thy bosom, and request thy speedy return; when thou leavest me, all goes wrong with me. I deprecate thy absence, and dread the thought of being forsaken by thee, and given up to the coldness, deadness, and corruption of my own heart. I pray and hope it shall be otherwise; my hopes are

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founded upon and encouraged by the following promises: "And my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." "Lo, I am with you always." "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever. He will turn again." Amen.

Having the prospect of our sacramental feast, I would be, and am looking unto Jesus for direction in all my ways, for comfort in all my distresses, for protection in all my dangers, for provision in all my wants, for assistance in all my duties, and for conducting me through the world, and guiding me to glory. I lament that the little troublesome occurrences of life should ever incapacitate me for spiritual exercises. The Lord pity me: he knows my frame, he will not forget me.

Tranent, 1st August, 1798.—God is just, he frowns in righteousness; the provoking of sons and daughters is grievous, they may wonder at his patience towards them; he deals not with them after their sins, nor rewards them according to their iniquities. It is however for their consolation that though he may chasten he will not punish, though he may frown, he will not forsake. This is as the waters of Noah unto me: "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." The covenant which he makes with his people cannot be disannulled any more than the covenant of the day and of the night. He will remember his covenant for ever and ever, the word which he hath commanded to a thousand generations. We have solid grounds of faith and confidence even at those times when we walk in darkness. I will cleave to a frowning God; I will

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wait for his return, and hope that my light shall break forth speedily as the morning.

Had little sensible comfort on the sacramental Sabbath; felt heavy in the most of my exercises; yet may I walk every day with fear, lest I fall short of my duty, and lose the concern for my soul, which ought to be impressed upon it; my constant prayer should be, that I may not deceive nor be deceived. Notwithstanding some grounds of complaint, I see much reason for thankfulness. I am surrounded and loaded with mercies innumerable. Providence has dealt kindly with me in a recent domestic occurrence, nor are congregational favours a-wanting. O that in the mixed dispensations of my lot, I may perceive the loving kindness of the Lord, and may be led to humility, dependence, and praise. God is good: "He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

Tranent, March 5, 1799.—Cannot praise God for any remarkable elevation on the late solemnity; cannot, however, be sufficiently thankful for his goodness. O how should my heart melt into gratitude in reflecting on all his mercies to one who ought to look on himself as less than the least. Bodily health is a blessing which I have long enjoyed, and but poorly improved; yet I would wish to devote my life to the service of God, and be daily requesting of him opportunities for his work, and wisdom to embrace those that are given. It is likewise the desire of my soul, if this lying heart does not deceive me, that God would shine on my ways, save his people, bless his inheritance, feed them also, and lift them up. It is pleasant to think on the return of spring, it is truly delightful to see barren churches fructified, polluted

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souls purified, and worshipping assemblies enlivened. We were middling well attended on this occasion—it is so far well, that people come to hear the word of the Lord; were the Lord to touch their hearts by means of it, they would follow on in the ways of ordinances; the food of the soul is precious to them that are hungering and thirsting after righteousness: and as for them that are full of themselves, the Lord only can convince them of their wants and weaknesses; may they be awakened, some stirring among the dry bones would be a token for good. "Come, come, O come from the four winds, thou breath of the Lord, and breathe upon us slain, that we may live." Give proofs in the experience of many, that thou hast sanctified and sent me into this place, and hast not forsaken one who subscribes himself thy devoted servant, ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, 27th July, 1799.—It hath pleased God to visit me with an afflictive dispensation: was seized with a shivering and cold, accompanied with a feverish heat, for some days, and suddenly overpowered in the pulpit on Sabbath last at the close of the first prayer. Some alarm and confusion were occasioned; public worship was carried on by a brother who was provided for the purpose; and if he had appeared in time, I might have been prevented from the attempt. He was not blameable, but I might have been more patient, and allowed the congregation to wait for his arrival. It is all well, nothing is mistimed in Providence. If my treacherous heart does not deceive me, I acquiesce without a murmur in this dispensation of Providence—it hath been light and momentary; a member of the congregation has had a sore fever, and

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of some continuance, while my disorder was abated in a few days. His anger endureth but a moment —in his favour is life; "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." There is consolation strong and lasting indeed contained in the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses of the liv. chapter of Isaiah. I have thought them over, and repeated them to myself with satisfaction. What are all the delights of sense, and the joys of the sons of men? mere emptiness, compared with that comfortable persuasion which faith inspires of the continuance of Jehovah's great mercies and everlasting kindnesses. This is a sheet anchor in the day of distress; kept fast by it, we shall not sink. Still would I wish to maintain my hope in the Lord; his promises I know shall not be broken; and my faith in them, although often weak and wavering, shall not fail me. The door of mercy is yet open; and, as a sinner, I again look unto the Saviour, and lay hold on God's covenant: I resign and dedicate myself unto him, and rest on his saving arm for support during life, and at the close of it.

Tranent, March 19, 1800.—The Lord hath been again trying me in the furnace of affliction—was seized on the night of the 25th of February with feverish complaints. I lay under considerable distress for some days, when it pleased God to rebuke the disorder, and to give me a gradual recovery. During this period of heaviness, the Lord has dealt wonderfully with me; I have been supported, comforted, and delivered. If this treacherous heart does not deceive me, my consolations were in proportion to my sufferings; patience was strengthened, resignation was exercised, and a grateful sense of past mercies impelled me to say, under the severity of present af-

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flictions, "blessed be God;" and I thought myself enabled in every thing to give thanks unto him. Felt easy as to the issue of my trouble, having, as I would persuade myself, a good hope through grace that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death, that to me, living and dying, Christ shall be gain. It is my wish, however, to submit cordially to the will of the Lord in all things; if he preserves me, and visits me with future trials and services, I will trust in him for sufficient grace, that I may be, or do, or suffer, whatever he has appointed for me—I am in good hands. I cannot enough deplore my impatience, anxiety, and distrust; O that my soul were like a weaned child; like my Saviour, let me submit and adore—"not my will, but thine be done." Wait a while, my light shall break forth as the morning, and my health shall spring forth speedily; my righteousness shall go before me, and the Lord shall be my rear-ward. Amen.

Traneni, July 24, 1800.—This is an evening for meditation, prayer, and self-examination. Meditating on my own and the character of the Saviour, I perceive myself to be a guilty, polluted, and impoverished creature; I see him to be a suitable and sufficient Redeemer. In the language of faith, delight, and satisfaction, I will say of him, "my beloved is mine, and I am his." Praying about divine things, I request support to myself, grace to my family, prosperity to my congregation, success to my ministrations, and the divine presence on the ensuing solemnity; perhaps the Lord may yet do great things for us; he will not fail me nor forsake me, why then should I be dismayed. On the head of self-examination, what evidence have I that I belong unto Christ?

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what experience have I felt of the efficacy of his grace and the operation of his spirit? To these questions my heart replies, "Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee; whence else can it be that I desire thee, that I choose thee, that I depend upon thee, and look for the enjoyment of thee: I have, (if I am not under a delusion,) found thee precious to my soul, thy ordinances pleasant, thy work profitable, thy salvation the joy of my heart—with these things may I have a growing acquaintance." On this occasion, may the Lord give me convincing proofs of Christ in me. My prayer is with David in the li. Psalm, verses 7—15. the Lord doing these things for me, my lips shall shew forth his praise. O that thou wouldst come down—water our souls with a plentiful rain of the spirit—who can tell!—let me trust and go forward —at all events, nothing, I hope, shall ever separate me from the beloved of all saints—he is my Saviour and my hope, the rock of my strength, and the God of my salvation—"the Lord do so to me and more also, if even death shall part him and me." Amen.

ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Sept. 2, 1800.—Every Christian must feel himself to be a poor, weak, and dependent creature; of this truth my convictions are strong and impressive: but there is enough in Christ for me, enough of light, of liberty, of strength, of salvation, and of every thing. Glancing over Boston's Memoirs, I may be ashamed of myself; this good man, whose life was exemplary, and whose writings are savoury, was singularly pious and heavenly; he walked with God, and lived by faith; to him Christ was all in all; his affections were spiritual, and his conversation was on high; many, I see, were his fears, but he looked unto

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the Lord, and was enlightened; prayer was his delight, in every thing he made his request unto God, and God bowed to him his ear. O that I could be an imitator of him and others, who are now inheriting the promises; but, alas! I am not worthy to be a servant to these servants of my Lord. I am a poor, cold, carnal, helpless, inactive creature, without love, without zeal, without courage, and without perseverance; so far from possessing the boldness of the lion, I seem to myself to resemble the silly dove. Under these impressions, I feel heavy and heartless, yet, I trust, not altogether alienated and left; in me there is, I think, a will to that which is good—I would fear, and love, and serve the Lord—I would pray, I would preach, I would be devoted to God, I would be employed in the service of Christ, and instrumental in promoting the designs of his mediatorial glory. Such are my desires—God is witness.

Tranent, Feb. 10, 1801.—I am a monument of divine mercy, patience and long suffering; I have been chastised sore, but not given over to death; God hath in righteousness visited me with an afflictive dispensation: I was taken ill on the 20th of December last; my indisposition issued in a fever, which raged with violence for a few days, and began to abate of its severity about the end of that month; then the Lord in mercy rebuked the disorder, and gave me hopes of a recovery. When recollected and capable of thinking, I looked on myself as dying, and accounted the approach of death as not an unwelcome messenger, wishing to believe on the ground of faith in the doctrines of the Gospel, that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ I should be saved. This, if my lying heart does not deceive me, is my persuasion at

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present, and I trust will be my hope when I must walk through the dark valley. The Lord's thoughts were not my thoughts, he hath wrought a great deliverance for me; I desire to be satisfied, humbly adoring his sovereignty and goodness, and earnestly requesting that my prolonged life may be continually employed in declaring the works of the Lord. Like David in the cxviii. Psalm, verses 17, 18, 19, or in the close of the xxx. Psalm, "thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to thee for ever." Let me never forget the strong consolation with which I was supported under my trouble; enabling me to say, "I take pleasure in distresses, for when I am weak, then am I strong." I desire to retain a grateful remembrance of these doings of the Lord, to bless him at all times, and for all things, and particularly to say with heartfelt gratitude, according to this time, "what hath God wrought!" I have been long laid aside from the public services of religion; eight Sabbaths have elapsed since I was laid on the bed of languishing, and on none of them have I opened my mouth in public; however, the Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners. Trusting in his mercy, and relying on the aids of his grace, I design to appear in his name, and to fill my own place on Sabbath first. My weak, misgiving, unbelieving heart, often fails me; but I purpose to go, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; hoping that he will sustain me, and infuse into me something of the boldness of the lion, the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove. Amen.

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Tranent, Feb. 16, 1801.—Lectured and preached yesterday—glory be to God for carrying me through the services of the day with ease, with pleasure, and, I hope, with profit to myself and others. I record this to the praise of his name, and for my own encouragement in persevering in his work. "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and supplications; because he hath inclined his ear unto me, I will call upon him so long as I shall live." But thy help, O Lord, I every moment need: let me be humble, watchful, prayerful, and dependent; let me hope continually, and beware of dishonouring my God, and disquieting myself with vexing thoughts.

Tranent, April 15, 1801.—Let me recollect the mercies of the Lord, and think with gratitude upon them. O what I owe to the divine goodness! I will think of it when I go out, and when I come in, when I sit down, and when I rise up; I will take encouragement from it, and hope for further communications from its inexhaustible stores; "my people shall be satisfied with my goodness," saith the Lord, to which my soul replies, amen. O satisfy me early with thy mercy, that I may be glad and rejoice all my days! I trust the Lord hath not wholly deserted us; it would be highly consolatory to have more abundant tokens of his favour and presence, but I must go on—"the wind bloweth where it listeth;"—there is something more than a probability, there is absolute certainty in the divine promise: "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." I will trust in thee for direction, assistance, countenance, and success. It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect; he will give me the shield of his salva-

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tion, hold me up with his right hand, and his gentleness will make me great. Do not then, O my soul, sink into despondency, rise above thy fears, rejoice in the service of thy Saviour and thy God; persuading thyself that he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Let me keep in a humble, watchful, dependent frame: the word of the Lord is tried, he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.

Tranent, July 1, 1801.—Difficulties may occur in the way of duty—I have found it so—yet duty itself very pleasant and satisfactory. O my soul, be not discouraged, press forward, go on in the service of thy Redeemer; I trust thou canst attest from experience his love and his faithfulness; beware of pride, walk humbly with him, rest upon him, pray fervently unto him, he will not fail thee nor forsake thee; never dost thou find such exquisite satisfaction in any thing as in the enjoyment of his presence, ministering the word to his people, and beseeching sinners, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God. May this be ever thy attainment; how sweet, how desirable, how ravishing! Bless God; look unto him; he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry, for he hath said it: do ye believe it, and plead it, and rejoice in it—the Lord enable thee. Amen.

Tranent, July 23, 1801. *Fast evening.*—Waited on the Lord in the services of the day—heard precious truths concerning the duty of Christians in holding fast their profession, and coming boldly to the throne of grace, &c. with the encouragements given them to attend to it from Jesus being the Son of God, and our having him as a great High Priest passed into the heavens. But have much reason to complain of the

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dead, hard, and impenetrable heart—God only can touch it—may a live coal from the altar inflame it. Now, on a review of myself, my judgment tells me, and my conscience attests it, that I am a sinner; there is in my heart an unfathomable depth of deceit, there is in my practice an incalculable number of evils; I can neither deny them, nor atone for them; but I will betake myself to Jesus the Saviour, and I will rest on him for deliverance from them, and for the possession of salvation in all its promises and blessings. I adhere to my acceptance of him, professing my faith in him, and my dependence upon him; he is my Master, and I will serve him; he is my Redeemer, and I will hope to be redeemed by him; he is my God, and I will glory in him. I look unto him at this time for his presence, power, and spirit; I am encouraged to do so from former experience, and from present assurances in his word, that he will not forsake them that truly seek him; I have sought him, I feel a wish to seek him, and I hope he will not disappoint me—no, the Strength of Israel will not lie—with all safety I may trust to his word—living and dying I will trust—Lord help mine unbelief—O the need I have of him. A serious providence is visiting me and many others in the death of Mr. C——*, who is now lying a corpse in his house. What shall I say? One is taken, another is left.

Tranent, July 28, 1801.—I think I may speak to the praise of a promise-performing God; he hath not disappointed me; no, he hath dealt bountifully with me, making his service on Sabbath easy, pleasant, and delightful to me; and giving me at times, both in pri-

* The Parish Minister.

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vate and in public, to anticipate with some degree of satisfaction the glory which shall be revealed. What is this world compared with eternity? what are means and ordinances compared with the enjoyment of God himself? and it seems no very dreary thing to meet with death, and to lie down in a grave, in the faith of that light and gladness which are sown for the upright. A view of this disposes me to call frailty happy, and death desirable. Paul's faith will operate Paul's wish, "I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better;" yet the Lord's time must be waited upon. He is sparing me, I hope it is for some good end; let me be thankful. I ought to sing unto the Lord—I ought to love him—I ought to serve him—I ought above many to say, "My mouth shall speak the praises of the Lord for ever and ever." Amen.

Trment, Jan. 5, 1802.—With what humble, affectionate, and grateful recollections should I be filled as on this day; three and twenty years have elapsed this day since I was invested with the ministerial office; how poorly have I discharged the duties of it—how inefficacious my ministrations—how wonderful the divine patience, forbearance, and long suffering kindness! I am spared—some of my brethren, the most of my fathers, and many of my congregation, are removed: I perceive, too, many deaths around me of friends, neighbours, and acquaintances; let me realize the time of my departure, and labour in the work of the Lord with increasing vigour. But, alas! what can I do? the Lord make me in my future course an active and faithful servant, zealous for his glory, successful in his work, and wise in winning souls to the Redeemer. This, I think is my heart's desire and

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prayer: the Lord in answer unto it, and in fulfilment of his own word, grant the object of it, and to him be all the praise. Make my last days better than my first. Amen.

Tranent, Feb. 27, 1802.—Penetrated with a sense of the divine goodness, methinks I find myself at a loss in saying, what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me in my family concerns? we are preserved in his mercy, and share bountifully in his providential smiles: the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be exceedingly abundant towards us all. O let these little ones and their parents live before thee; the Lord bless mine as he doth the habitation of the just. Commemorating the mercies and the deliverances which he hath vouchsafed, I have affixed to the name of this child the term Ebenezer. This is my fifth child—I give them back to the Lord—the Lord take care of them, form them for himself, and render them the subjects of the grace of that ordinance which hath been administered in their names. I may be removed from them, they may be taken from me, but may the Lord be their God and mine, and nothing can separate us from him. The promise is unto you and your children, to me and to mine. Amen.

Tranent, June 29, 1802.—I feel myself easy—I perceive the goodness of God—I would be thankful. In the Christian life there are many changes—we are lift up and cast down—the Lord doth all things in wisdom and goodness—I leave it to him to lead me onward in what way he pleaseth, "to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." I hope he will bear me up in his service, carry me on in it, and enable me to finish my course with joy. Expe-

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rience worketh hope, hope maketh not ashamed, and partial communications are a sure presage of full and future enjoyments. I lament my timidity and my diffidence; perhaps this is more my affliction than my sin: my heart is for God—at all times, in all companies and places, I have a desire to show myself on his side. But, alas! how little I *do*; frequently dare hardly throw out a hint on his behalf; it would please me to be inspired with the boldness of the lion, that I might witness for him with courage, constancy and zeal. Shame may cover me, when I think of the boldness of Scripture saints, of ancient martyrs, and of some present professors; O that a portion of the spirit which rested on them may descend and abide on me at all times. Were my faith stronger and my love warmer, my courage I think would be greater. The Lord work all his works in me, and to him be the glory. Amen.

Tranent, July 25, 1802. *Sacrament Sabbath morning.*—Yes, Lord, I have thought again, and do again subscribe myself thy servant in the Gospel, and a sinner expecting to be saved by grace. Let this be a sure covenant ratified on high, and established through eternity; it cannot fail on God's part—and God hath engaged for the poor, feeble, fallible writer,

ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Sept. 10, 1802.—Attended this week the meeting of synod—feel interested in the welfare of the church, and am desirous that her ministers may be under divine conduct in their deliberations, but lament that I cannot make any appearance in her courts; how it is, whether through diffidence, or not having accustomed myself to speak extempore, I will

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not presume to determine; but it is not, as I think, through disinclination or disaffection to the cause of Christ that I sit silent: God, who knows my frame, will pardon my weakness, and accept the will for the deed. "It was good that it was in thine heart to build a house for my name." I would wish for boldness and eloquence in pleading for the honour of him whom I serve, but am conscious here of great defects. Alas! that it should be so. I will not at this time lay down my pen without saying for fresh mercies, "blessed be God, the God of Israel;" he will yet put a new song in my mouth, and continue time after time to do so till he bring me to the end of my course; then I expect to praise him through eternity with adoring seraphs and glorified saints, without interruption, without weariness, and without end, hallelujah! Amen.

Tranent, Sept. 26, 1802. *Sabbath evening.*—I take up my pen to record the Lord's goodness. What I have felt engages me to say, "I will sing unto the Lord, who hath dealt bountifully with me." O the inexpressible difference between enjoying his presence and pining in his absence! This day my strength has been renewed, and I have been carried up as on eagles' wings: it is frequently otherwise, but all is done in wisdom and goodness on God's part.

Tranent, March 26, 1803.—Arranging some secular concerns, I see much cause to sing unto the Lord, who in things of this kind hath dealt bountifully with me. I desire to guide my affairs with discretion, to give to every one his due, to consecrate my substance to the Lord, and to covet earnestly the best gifts. I cannot too much detest the world as a portion, yet to

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have a little in the world, with the divine blessing, is a mercy. I do not wish to be prodigal; and I desire to be neither mean nor miserable. I hope my heart, though too carnal, is renewed and set in its habitual aims on things above. To-morrow I supply a neighbouring congregation, whose pastor is in much bodily weakness. Consider it as a mercy that this is not my situation; and reckon it in this respect more blessed to give than to receive.

Tranent, Nov. 14, 1803.—The Lord is good—I derive all from him—I owe all unto him—I wish to be more entirely devoted to his honour and to his service—my desires run this way; but, alas! they are languid and inoperative: there is a period approaching when every sanctified wish of the renewed mind will be completely gratified. We have of late been visited with death upon death in the congregation—Christ hath the keys of death and the grave, he opens and shuts according to his pleasure—let us be sober and watchful, like men waiting for the coming of their Lord. I feel thankful, if my heart does not deceive me, for the divine patience and goodness—the Lord does not take me away in his long suffering—he gives me bodily health, and upholds me in his service—"not unto me, not unto me," &c. Preached yesterday (Sabbath) at North Berwick, by appointment of presbytery, (the Lord having removed by death the pastor of that congregation, a young man, settled not much above two years,) and made intimation of this providential visitation, and declared them in a vacant state. Christ holds the stars in his right hand, he determines the time and the place of their shining, and extinguishes them whenever he pleases; to his praise I record my preservation, and to his name I

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present my request, that he would make me a burning and a shining light. The Lord my God light my candle, and enlighten my darkness. Amen.

Tranent, Nov. 28, 1803. *Birth-day.*—The mercies of God to me, and my ingratitude to him during the years of my life that are past, form a striking contrast. I cannot sufficiently admire the one, I cannot be humbled low enough on account of the other: God hath been a God of mercy unto me—alas! I have been a child of disobedience unto him. I see in some measure my forgetfulness of God, and condemn myself for it; my desire is for grace, that I may be enabled to live to his praise; and my hope is, that he will uphold me in his service, till he bring me to that place where his servants serve him in purity; then I shall be freed from all present imperfections, and from all self-reproach on account of them, and will vie with the great multitude in proclaiming his praises. Meanwhile let his merciful kindness to me, and my family, and my flock, be marvellous in my eyes. All inflamed and all enraptured with it, let me sing aloud of his righteousness! blessed Jesus, I call thee, my Lord and my God! I consider myself as one of thy unworthy servants, and do look unto thee for support and assistance. Whether my appointed course shall be longer or shorter, may it be well occupied; and at the end of it may the glories of the Redeemer be in my mouth, assurance of his favour in my heart, and a glorious immortality in my eye. In life may I walk with God, at death may I die in the Lord, and through eternity may I be with him.

Tranent, Jan. 17, 1804.—Looking over some money matters this forenoon, I must admire the goodness of

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God to me. "I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me." Forbid, O my God, that concerns of this kind should ever occupy an undue place in my affections. Make me humble, thankful, and careful, that I may be ready for every good work, forward in remembering thy poor members, and contributing my mite to every purpose that has for its object the glory of thy dear name. I owe thee myself, and all that I am and have; and O let me be in myself, and in my substance, solely and entirely for thee. Amen.

Tranent, April 24, 1804.—I should have been in Edinburgh this day at the meeting of Synod; the morning being unfavourable, and continuing to rain through the day, did not set out. Shut myself in my closet between four and six in the afternoon, and mused, and thought, and moaned out my desires to the everywhere present God, that his cause may be supported in the feeble hands to which it is committed, and among all denominations who make a profession of it, that with our body the Gospel may be preserved in its purity, and felt in its power. I think we seldom display greater weakness than in Christ's judicatories; I cannot correct the evil, but I pray God that those whom he emboldens to speak and act in them may be under his direction and influence, and that the proceedings of men may terminate in the glory of God.

Tranent, July 8, 1804.—Now I am by myself, I must acknowledge the divine goodness, and record the mercies of the Lord. He is a God who is mindful of his covenant, and faithful to his promise. Those assurances, Isa. xli. 10—16. were animating and

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encouraging; experiencing the grace contained in them, and hoping for a continuance and an increase of this experience, I will rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy one of Israel. God's words to Jeremiah are written for our comfort, "I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." Methinks he points out my duty in saying to the same Prophet, "thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise and speak unto them all that I command thee." This is what I would wish to do, what, through grace, I purpose to do, and what I hope in this way to be strengthened to do. Amen.

Tranent, Oct. 27, 1804.—I feel uneasy at being so long in noting down providential occurrences towards my family: An addition was made to our number by the birth of a son on the 8th of September last: the child was apparently healthful and thriving; he continued so about fourteen days, when he was seized with an inward complaint, of which he died in about two days and a half more; the disorder soon changed his countenance, and numbered him with the dead. He died on the 26th of the above month—baptism was intended on the following Sabbath, consequently it was not administered in the outward sign; but, conscious of no contempt of the ordinance, and not aware of the event in his unexpected removal, may I not hope that he was blessed with the grace of the institution, and saved by the washing of regeneration? I see in this dispensation the truth of what I have often read, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble." Can I bring him back? no; I must go to him, he will not return to me. The time is short—O to be active and earnest in working the work of him that sent me. Rise up,

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shake off indolence and heaviness, be patient, resigned, and cheerful—the will of the Lord is good—the work of the Lord is necessary, and the enjoyment of the Lord will be sweet and everlasting.

Tranent, Feb. 26, 1805.—With a thankful heart I sit down to mention the loving kindness of the Lord; he hath shewn me his favour, not so much in lifting me up, as in supporting and delivering me. I trust I was not without his presence in my Christian and ministerial services on Sabbath—I can at least say, "my heart trusted in him, and I was helped." Spoke, I thought, a word in season; the people were apparently serious and attentive—the Lord alone can open their hearts, and plant the seed of grace in them. I wish to express it as a testimony of God's goodness that I felt little or no inconvenience on Sabbath from this troublesome cough which I have had for some time. God hath done for me in this respect what I was directed to ask from him, giving me rest from my sorrow, and from my fear, and from my hard bondage, wherein I have been made to serve. I think I am pleased with every view I take of God's character and conduct; and feel gratitude, love, duty, and interest, all constraining me to subscribe myself his poor, unworthy, yet, I trust, his sincere and devoted servant, ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Dec. 5, 1805.—To-day there was a national thanksgiving. Embracing the opportunity, it was with us a congregational thanksgiving and humiliation. Public exercises were conducted accordingly. O that I, as an individual, were exemplary in gratitude and humility. God's manifold kindness is great—greatly is he to be praised. Would wish to

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retain a lively sense of what God has done or me, my family, and flock. It should pain me to think that grateful impressions are so feeble and inoperative. I trust God has given me his grace, which is infinitely better than silver and gold; though, in this respect, he has communicated more liberally than I ever expected, or could deserve. While I would be thankful for all his mercies, I would prize the best, and request that none of these inferior blessings may occupy any undue place in my heart. Though an economist in the use of money on common things, yet would not feel backward in laying it out for whatever purpose has the glory of my God and Saviour for its object. My prayer in this, as in every other case, is to know my duty, and to be strengthened for the performance of it. Forbid, O God, that ever I should be averse to serve thee with the first and best of all that I am or have. But here, too, I come short, and ought to be ashamed of myself. Let me declare mine iniquity, and be sorry for my sin; and endeavour through grace to be more holy and humble, more devoted to the interests of religion, and more liberal in distributing to the necessities of the saints, for the sake of our common Lord and Master. Amen.

Tranent, Feb. 27, 1806. *Sacrament fast.*—On Sabbath first the holy ordinance of the supper is, God willing, to be administered. In the prospect, we have this day been employed in fasting, as was also the nation at large on account of the war. Having none to assist me, I preached twice from Hosea. xiv. 2, 3. Considering penitent Israel's conduct as recorded for the instruction and imitation of penitent sinners and nations in after times: the Lord was gra-

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cious, and I desire to be thankful. I would mention his goodness in relation to my bodily health; though not exempted this season from the cold, attended with a cough, yet the visitation hitherto has been moderated, and I have not been disabled for public service. I would hope the God of my health will continue to favour me in this respect, to the end I may glorify him. Now I am by myself, conscious that the Lord looketh on the heart, and that my Father seeth in secret, I do sincerely record my convictions, my feelings, and my desires; my convictions of guilt, my feelings of misery, and my desires of mercy, through the righteousness of my dear Redeemer. With these views I preach the truth to others, I receive it for myself, and make an open confession of it in the church, and before all men—God forbid that I should glory but in the cross. I would persuade myself of the presence of my God in the sanctuary. What will he withhold from those of whom he speaks as his people that have sought him? he says unto them, "be it unto thee even as thou wilt." I humbly hope that God will not forget me—no; the word is gone out of his mouth in righteousness, "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. Herein I do and will rejoice, casting my fears and dependencies to the moles and to the bats. So be it, and so I trust it shall be.

Tranent, March 5, 1806.—Well, my God hath not disappointed me; "he is found of them that seek him." Strengthened, I hope, by his grace, I was enabled to speak with some degree of feeling and readiness on the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor." (Action sermon text.) Let gratitude and love con-

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tinually work in my heart; much is forgiven me, much is done for me, and much is promised unto me. O let me love much. I would wish to recommend the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to all that hear me, and may God make my services acceptable to the saints; he hath not left me, and I trust never will; changes have befallen us, but he still continues to uphold us. To me individually, his providences have been changing and diversified, yet not without a large infusion of mercy and goodness. I will trust him, and praise him, and live and die rejoicing in him; praying that I, my family, and my flock, may be to the Lord for a name and for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. Content to be enriched through his poverty, and willing to ascribe the whole praise to the glory of his grace; not unto me, not unto me; unto thee, O God, I give thanks, I do give thanks to thee, for that thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare. In relation to what may await me, it is not for me to know. Let me rejoice in the will of my God, and labour to be accepted of him; employing my time, my strength, my character, my influence, my all, to his glory. So help me. Amen.

Tranent, May 11, 1806. *Sabbath evening.*—How long, O Lord, shall vain vexing thoughts prey upon me? why is it thus with me? shew me wherefore thou contendest with me—uphold me in mine integrity, and set me continually before thy face—let not mine enemies rejoice over me—make me more than a conqueror—set my feet upon the Rock of Salvation, and there may I stand with firmness amid all the storms and tempests of this poor life—he shall dwell on high, and hear as below him the din and noise of

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this bitter world. Alas! that I should be so little acquainted with the calmness and composure, the joy and peace of believing. Were my faith vigorous and active, I might be always cheerful, elevated, and happy; but this grace is sometimes as it were asleep, and then there is within darkness, disorder, impatience, fretfulness, and every evil work. Have to bewail that these discourses on the abounding of sin and grace, and the superabounding of the one to the other, have not had that sweetness to me in the delivery and afterwards, which such precious things ought to have; though not so savoury to me, they may perhaps be satisfactory to others. The most excellent doctrines will make no impression on our obdurate hearts, but as the Lord the spirit pleaseth. Amen.

Tranent, July 24, 1806. *Sacrament Fast evening.*—"There is another law in my members warring against the law of my mind," I cannot do the things which I would—I feel corrupt affections lively and strong, gracious attainments languid and feeble, and spiritual exercises heavy and long—strengthen, O God, the things that remain. I will not cast away my confidence—my faith rests not on frames and feelings—the word of the Lord endureth for ever. Looking to it, I will rejoice in hope; as a sinner, as a Christian, and as a minister, I derive encouragement from it. I will not dishonour my God, I will trust and not be afraid: as for me, I will come to thy house in the multitude of thy mercies. Thus will I go to the sanctuary on earth and in heaven, to the pulpit and to the table, to services, to sufferings, to death, and to the tribunal, and, I will add, to God the judge of all. Such are the mercies of an atoned God, that they are my only resource. He is a merciful and a gracious

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God—I know he is so, and I hope to find him to be so.

Tranent, Sept. 12, 1806.—I write myself a debtor every day to the goodness of God; with much humility and self-condemnation should I acknowledge his kindness to me. What care do I perceive in others about their families? I would not be careless about mine, but let my chief care be that God may care for them; I give them to him that he may provide for them, and dispose of them to his own glory. Let me never forget what he hath done for the family of which I am a member: it is my duty to receive thankfully what God gives freely, and to make the best use of it, first unto his glory, and then for all the purposes of real advantage for my domestics—much wisdom and grace are requisite. The love of the world is a prevailing evil—let me use it, but not abuse it—let me not put it where it ought not to be—let me, in the same sense in which all true Christians are, be dead to it, and notwithstanding the use which my children may have of it—let me in my own time honour the Lord with what he gives me—Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jerah.

Tranent, Feb. 26, 1807. *Sacrament Fast.*—Preached this day on Luke ii. 48. and Rev. xvii. 14. The Lord does great things for me, the weakness of the instrument contributes to his honour. I cannot lift up myself—what but gratitude and humility are becoming in such a debtor and dependant. I feel, if I am not deceived, a warm heart to the Lamb, an attachment to his interest, and a desire to promote his glory. Can hardly doubt of his love to me, but must lament my coldness and inactivity in his service.

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With my present prospect, mine eye is toward the Lamb. 1st. I am a sinner, and there is no salvation for me but through the blood of the Lamb. 2d. I am a Christian, and there is no acting in this character but through the grace of the Lamb. 3d. I am a minister, and I can neither fulfil the duties of that office, nor exemplify the graces of the station, but by virtue of communications from the Lamb. What then? I write it, and let it stand upon record, that the Lamb is the source of all my hope, the life of my soul, and the God of my salvation. Particularly with respect to the work before me, I would request, 1st, that the honour of the Lamb may chiefly be my aim. 2dly, That the truths of the Lamb may be dear to my soul, and deeply impressed on my heart. 3dly, That I may be enabled to speak them with seriousness and solemnity, so as to command the attention and win the affections of those that hear me, not to myself, but to the Lamb. And, 4th, that at the communion table I may resign myself, my family, my flock, my all, to the worthy Lamb, in the truth and sincerity of my heart. Amen.

Tranent, March 3, 1807.—I would fain hope that the word of the Lord is not preached in vain, the divine spirit alone can give it efficacy and success; we must wait his time, abounding in prayer and thanksgiving. Let me attend to these duties, the Lord hath dealt well with me—I think he hath given me the answer of my requests in a note marked February 26. I have abundant reason to bless his holy name—let me think, speak, act, live, die, to his glory. I look forward to my immortality with hope that it shall be devoted to the praises of him that sitteth on the throne, and the

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Lamb. O that now the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne may lead us, and feed us, and give us to feel the workings of his grace under present duties and difficulties, till, with eternal delight and satisfaction, we are gathered to the innumerable multitudes before the throne, where we shall see his face, and serve him without weariness, without interruptions, and without end—the Lord God and the Lamb is the light thereof. How childish and feeble are our present conceptions! But I will hope to the end, and when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away—we shall see him as he is.

Tranent, October 26, 1807.—Near three months have elapsed since I last wrote on this paper; during that time various providences have occurred in my personal and relative concerns—have been blessed with merciful, and tried with afflictive dispensations. To me and my family God hath been gracious; his merciful kindness is great, and ought to meet on our part with the most grateful acknowledgments. These I aim at rendering to him in our religious exercises; and feel, I think, that force constraining me to the duties of the family and the closet. It is not for me to know how soon there may be a reverse; but this I know, that future events are in the power of my God and Father, to whose will I desire to be submissive at all times. He keeps us in mind of our mortality in the death of others. Another of my sisters died on the 7th, and was interred on the 12th of this month.—Comfortably married in Edinburgh, she lived, I hope, in the fear of God, and may be numbered among the blessed dead who die in the Lord. Our mutual intercourse had been long and

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seldom or never suffered an interruption; it is now terminated, and let me acquiesce with the will of the Lord. What a humbling sight! a friend, an acquaintance, a brother, or a sister, laid in their cold and comfortless mansion the grave. On this occasion my feelings were moved, and I was almost overpowered. What poor things we are with all our pride and stateliness! we are brought to this dark and narrow house; the worm is spread under us, and the worms cover us: may the thought ever penetrate and impress my mind, and actuate me in the whole of my behaviour. Perhaps I may be the next of the family; the Lord knows, though I know not—it is enough for me to be ready. Let death find me in Christ, active in his service, and looking for his coming—blessed are those servants that are found so doing. To widowed persons, to parentless children, to bereaved relations, these dispensations speak loudly and earnestly. May we understand their language, and comply with their designs. Faith in the living Redeemer, and a lively hope of living with him, is all in all to the believer's comfort. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c.

For some Sabbaths past I have been animated and invigorated in the work of the Lord; with humility and thankfulness I mention it, and desire to give him the glory I contemplate his greatness, and recollect my own weakness, and subscribe myself a dog, or a worm, or a beast. R. SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Nov. 17, 1807.—As for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face continually." I may not be able to apply these words in all their extent, but do not apprehend my-

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self to be an entire stranger to them—blessed be God for any experience I have of them. With him who first spake them, I will add, "as for me, I will walk in mine integrity. Redeem me, O Lord, and be merciful to me—my foot standeth on an even place—in the congregations will I bless the Lord." This I aim at, and will pursue—strengthening myself in the Lord, and labouring to advance, in my humble sphere, the interest and the glory of his name. He hath been mindful of me, and will, I hope, bless me more and more. What shall I render? I can render nothing adequate to what I have received. Yet it becomes me to say, and I do say it, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant," &c. Alas! that I should be so timid and inactive in his service. It pains me to hear so much idle talking among some of ourselves about the time of a sacrament; yet not having courage, I cannot restrain it, and wanting readiness for conversation, I cannot introduce what is seasonable and profitable. I sit, therefore, often silent, lamenting that we should be so unedifying in our interviews with one another. The Lord make us all good ministers of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Tranent, Dec. 24, 1807.—Congregational fast and thanksgiving,—alone in the public services. Isaiah i. 4. and Isaiah xvii. 7. were the passages explained and applied; thought the latter of these particularly seasonable, as the present is a day in which a man should look unto his Maker, &c. Have been preaching this text and sermon to myself—think I am very blameable in looking more to the creature than to the Creator, and that God has chastised me for my conduct, embittering some of my creature comforts, and de-

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priving me of others of them. Now I will look to my Maker and to my God, and expect from him support in life, comfort in death, and glory in heaven. But is he my God? how can I doubt of it? I hope in his word, am devoted to his service, and feel all that is within me saying, "yea, mine own God is he." Well, since he is my God, I will love him, and serve him, and cleave unto him; "persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall separate me from him." My heart shall be reserved for him, my gold and my silver shall be holiness unto him, my life shall be spent in his service, and my death, I hope, shall be for his glory. Thoughts of death are frequent in my mind; let me anticipate and familiarize this event, and hope, when it comes, the Lord will make me as willing to leave this world as he is ready to take me out of it. Have often felt, and do feel, an ardent desire that I may die cheerfully, willingly, and speaking to the praise of my God and Saviour, the good Master in whose service, so far as he is concerned, I have lacked nothing—but, alas! woes me for myself!

Another year is near the close—during the course of it what smiles, what frowns, what mercies, what judgments, what crosses, what comforts, have occurred! I foresee the end of men and things—of time itself; but I look to my Maker as the everlasting God, and the portion of my soul for ever. My days are as a shadow that declineth; I must wither as grass, but the Lord shall endure for ever, and the remembrance," &c. With God I close, and put my name to it,

R. Shirreff.

Tranent, Feb. 18, 1808. *Fast evening.*—On Sabbath, if God permit, we intend to celebrate sacra-

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mentally the dying love of our Redeemer. Every ordinance of his is precious and profitable. We justly regard this as one eminently calculated for the comfort and establishment of the saints. In prospect of it, I feel a concern on my mind to have the presence of the Master of the feast, to be arrayed in the fine linen which is the righteousness of saints, to be decked with the beauties of holiness, and otherways prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I know where this preparation is to be found, and hope to receive it from the God of all grace for myself, and would be requesting it from him for all those to whom I minister in holy things. In the pulpit, and at the table of the Lord, I desire to appear for Christ, like one who hopes to be eternally obliged unto him. He is the church's God, he is my God, and as such I will behold him. While I am beholding him, I hope he will look upon us, and feed us as a shepherd. (Text for Sabbath, xl. 11.) As to marks and evidences of the grace of God in me, though I do not overlook them, yet I will not eagerly follow after them. My own feelings and convictions satisfy me of my need of a Saviour; and the Gospel I preach to others I desire to apply to myself, resting on it as a faithful saying, and worthy of my acceptation, that Christ came to save sinners. This is my first, my last, my sole dependence; as a proof of it, I love him, and serve him, and do in private and public devote myself to him. This I have done, this I mean to do, and this I trust shall never be undone. My God, the covenant is sure on thy part; and I look to thee to secure it on mine—Yes, the word of my God shall stand for ever. Amen.

Was alone this day as to human aid; felt, however, as I thought, assistance from above, and was helped

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both in praying and preaching. Let me take this as a token for good. Preached from Ezek. vii. 16. and Isa. i. 2.

Tranent, July 28, 1808, Sacrament Fast evening.—Must be humble and thankful the Lord has not left me alone. Felt my heart impressed in the prayer, and was supplied with what I thought suitable in the few things that were spoken afterwards. Heard two sermons on Rev. iii. 15, 16. "I know thy works." Very characteristic of ourselves—the Lord warm and enliven us; the spirit of life from God enter into us. I sit by myself in the presence and under the eye of God. Have been endeavouring to cast myself, my family, and my flock, upon the Lord. Convinced of great guilt and wretchedness, Christ is my only refuge; knowing that a God in Christ makes a grant of himself in the Gospel, have declared my acceptance of this grant, and said unto the Lord, "Thou art my God." My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high, that in the sincerity of my heart I have accepted of the Lord to be my God; I cannot think he will reject me, I would not indulge a desponding thought of his good will to me. Particularly on this occasion, I request from my God communications of his grace, manifestations of his countenance, and all that aid and support of which I stand in need in my Christian and ministerial duties. He will not despise the prayer of the destitute, and I will endeavour to trust him for his grace.—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why," &c. Intend on Sabbath to preach from Luke xii. 32. "Fear not, little flock," &c. The subject is encouraging; the good Shepherd will feed me and my flock in this green pasturage,

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and my Father will give me the faith and hope of the kingdom before he bring me to it.—His I am,

R. SHIRREFF.

Tranent, October 31, 1808.—By the good hand of my God I am returned in safety from my journey. Sailed from Leith on the evening of Tuesday the 16th of August, and arrived at Huna in Caithness about ten on Saturday evening, the 20th of the same month; reached my brother's on Monday the 22d, and continued with him till the 4th of October; went on that day to Wick, where we were kept waiting for a vessel until Monday morning the 17th of that month. Sailing across the Moray Frith, we were landed at Aberdeen next day in the afternoon; and from thence followed out our journey by land, which was accomplished on Friday evening the 21st of October, when we were restored to the place of our abode, to the young family, and to the little congregation, in comfort, much, I believe, to the satisfaction of all concerned, and not less to my own and my companion in travel. On a review of providential occurrences in this excursion, the goodness of God is the most striking object that presents itself to my mind, and one which should fill it with the liveliest gratitude. He preserved me in health and strength, and gave me favour among the people with whom I sojourned. We were on a boisterous sea on our return, a day and a night I sat cold and comfortless in a little wet cabin, the water lashing on the deck, and sometimes falling into it, and the vessel at the same time so agitated by the wind and the waves that I was frequently thrown from my seat, and laid flat on the floor. Notwithstanding, the Lord was gracious, keeping us above water, and preserving us in the midst of no small danger. His

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goodness, too, I consider as visibly manifested in his care of the family and congregation at home, both of which we found well, and nothing material had occurred to interrupt the peace or harmony of either. I must, in particular, record the mercy of the Lord in affording me regularly on his own day, except one, an opportunity of preaching the word of life to my fellow men; the people received me with respect, and were ready to receive the message from my mouth; they assembled in considerable numbers, and were attentive and serious, apparently more impressed with what was said to them than is to be seen in our congregations at home. May I hope some good was done! The Lord give the increase, and send to his people here, and there, and everywhere, times of refreshing from his presence. Many of them were attached to our communion, and but for the distance and difficulties which lie in the way, would, I think, make a settlement welcome. To us they were kind and hospitable; I was in my brother's house as if I had been at home; I must reckon him and others among the rest of my Christian friends and benefactors, and try to render unto them a prophet's reward. On the whole, I desire now with a humble and thankful heart to set up my Ebenezer, and to inscribe on it this motto, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped," which was yesterday the subject of discourse. The promise made to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 15. and his vow, verses, 20, 21, and 22, were frequently revolved in my mind. The Lord hath preserved and provided for me—I am come again to my house in peace, and the Lord shall be my God; my house shall be his house, my property at his call, and my life devoted to his service—poor returns for such rich receivings. Such as they are I present them, and hope they will be an

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odour of a sweet smell, acceptable to the Lord in the beloved. These are my views and my feelings; the impression, I trust, will be permanent and operative: and as proof of my sincerity and earnestness in this little narrative, I put my name to it this 31st day of October, 1808. ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, July 27, 1809. *Sacrament Fast evening.*—Prayed as usual on this day, and directed the attention of my people to the consideration of John's Epistles to the Asiatic churches, in Revelation ii. and iii. chapters; and heard sermon, by Mr. G. B. forenoon and afternoon. The truths delivered were of deep interest—the Lord give the blessing. Now, alone in the presence of God, and aware that he searches and knows me, I do appeal unto him to judge my sincerity: in the truth of my heart I give myself unto him, and would believe that he is mine, and that I am his—I have said it, I do say it, and through grace I will adhere to it, "THE LORD IS MY GOD." I see a suitableness in him to my case, and am sensible of the grant which he makes of himself to me: and, in the faith of both, I acquiesce, and accept, and will trust. Nor are evidences awanting; the Lord in his word, his person, and his work, is the object of my attachment. I love the Lord, and am willing to serve him: it grieves me that ever I should feel any alienation of heart from him, and any coldness in my poor attempts to serve him. My desire is to the Lord, my hope is in his word, and my dependence is on his mercy—these last lines in the xiii. Psalm, "But I have all my confidence in thy mercy," &c. bespeak my sentiments and wishes; nor will I despair of an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom, &c. 2 Peter i. 11. This is meant to

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be the subject of discourse on Sabbath—the Lord enlarge my heart and open my mouth, and give me to anticipate what I hope one day to feel. Have been at this time particularly concerned for the outpouring of the Spirit, and directed to preach and pray on that point. I will wait on the Lord, and expect that mine and the souls of my hearers shall be as a well-watered garden. The needy shall not always be forgotten, the Lord is mindful of his covenant, and will not be forgetful of his people—"I will pour my spirit," &c. &c. Amen.

August 1.—Have been looking over and arranging the communicant roll; find it to be much as it hath been for some years past, about 200 and a dozen—a small yet a weighty charge; of these God alone knows who are and who are not real in their profession—of the virgins in the parable five were wise, and five were foolish—are we thus divided? The determination must be left to him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. It becomes me to judge charitably, and to act impartially; the Lord knows them that are his. My request is, that he may enable me to preach his word, to be instant, &c. &c.—Nor can I effect any thing without the concurrence of his spirit. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whose I am, and whom I serve, will not forsake me—I have declared my acceptance of him, and purpose through grace to abide in him; and I am persuaded, or I will endeavour to persuade myself, that he will not cast me off. In this faith I would wish to go on, so long as he has any use for me. Speaking to his honour, and dying with his praise on my lips, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It affects me to meet with coldness and indifference from any to whom I am a friend—yet it

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must be so in the present state. To the future I look forward, when friendship and love will be without mixture, as well as without end. My dispositions, I think, are peaceable, and my aim is to follow peace and holiness. I have thought it desirable never to enter into contentions with any man; and rather than do so, to submit to dishonour and to injury. Never anxious to vindicate my own character, nor to assert my own rights; leaving my name, my interests, and all my concerns in the hand of God, enabling me to do worthily in my station.

Tranent, Dec. 28, 1809.—Kept this day a congregational fast and thanksgiving—was alone in the public services. Preached twice; the subjects were, "Woe unto us, that we have sinned." "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord." Poorly attended; the congregation apparently not half assembled. This, though discouraging to me, is still worse if viewed as an evidence of inconsideration and inattention to the providences of God. Worldly engagements and occupations may be an obstruction to some; but in the case of others, might they not be forgotten? Alas! our case is languid—I have felt in myself much deadness and distress. In the close of the exercises and since, my spirit has been flat, and my frame heavy, yet not lost altogether to a sense of duty—have at least a desire to be humble and thankful. As to myself, innumerable evils compass me about; in all my doings there is sin: none of my works are perfect; not one of them can be a ground of dependence—I betake myself to the pure and spotless righteousness of my Redeemer, and rest on the atonement made by him for all. I look on myself as a debtor to the great Benefactor for all my enjoyments; to whom I will

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give thanks always, and for whose glory I would speak and act while I live. Such is his goodness, that I can never sufficiently extol it; and such is his patience and long suffering, that he is still bearing, and supporting, and delivering me. Now, after many years provocation in the wilderness, my complaint of a cough has returned this winter with considerable severity; yet so kept under, that it has not disabled me for my weekly ministerial services. "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

Tranent, March 1, 1810.—General fast, sacramental also with us.—Intending on Sabbath first to celebrate the dying love of our blessed Lord; officiated in the public services alone: found myself at times supported and enlarged to speak with earnestness. Blessed be God, I will hope in him. Be not cast down, my soul, he will not leave thee destitute. He is my God, and I am one of his people; he is my master, and I am his servant. Can I think he will send me a warfare on my own charges? Alas! that ever a dishonourable thought of him should arise in my mind: I will resist these enemies of my peace, and still try to encourage myself in the Lord my God. But is he my God? Yes: O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, "thou art my God;" as such I have chosen him, and will repeat my choice; and in life and death, through his grace, will adhere to it. In the sanctuary, and in the closet, and at the table of the Lord, I have made this choice; and as an evidence of it, I feel the bent of my heart and of my life to be unto him. No, it is no delusion, (if I dare speak my fixed sentiments and genuine feelings,) but the ground of faith in the promise, and the grant in it, "I am the Lord thy God." Here I rest, setting to my seal

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that God is true. Concerning the work that is before me, I will, both as a Christian and as a minister, go forward to it, with the glory of God in my eye, and with the grace and love of the Redeemer in my heart, not doubting but that he will give me what communications are best for me. What though I feel weak in mind, and feeble in my nervous system, yet the sufficiency of his grace is more than adequate to all my infirmities; and why may I not trust in the Lord, with whom there is everlasting strength? Yes, I will trust and not be afraid. Received notice this evening of the death of a friend. My time will come; O to be ready. Ministers are not suffered to continue; I too must resign; let me occupy till my Lord come, and be faithful unto death, and then receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. So help me, O God. Amen and Amen. "So shall we be ever with the Lord," is intended to be the subject of discourse on Sabbath. I am now going to seek him, and express my dependence upon him—the Lord hear me.

July 29. *Sabbath morning, eight o'clock.*—Now I have done, I devolve myself and all my concerns upon the Lord, not deficient, as I think, in preparation in point of thought, study, &c. I am afraid of self-confidence, which I hereby renounce; and would commit my works unto the Lord, in hope he will establish my thoughts. Yes, the Lord Jesus, I hope, will be with my spirit, disposing and enabling me to speak the things that concern himself. Rev. vii. 17. (Action sermon text,) I go again to my knees, leaving myself and all upon him. Cheer up, my soul, the day of thy redemption draweth nigh; encourage thyself in thy God, and think of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, meanwhile, the Lord will

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not leave thee destitute. Having been with thee in so many troubles, he will not forsake thee now—no, no; I will hope to the end, and expect that the faithful God will not suffer me to be tempted above what I am able to bear. Every day will not be alike dreary; the morning cometh as well as the night, the one is necessary no less than the other; but THAT day will dawn when the clouds shall not return, nor the night succeed; the Lord shall be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended. What a pleasant transporting prospect! the thought of it ever be animating and invigorating. Amen.

Tranent, Dec. 27, 1810.—We were employed in the exercises of thanksgiving, humiliation, and prayer; combining these duties together which the calls of providence unite and require of us; the subjects were, Psalm lxv. 11. and Rom. xii. 4. The goodness of God in the course of the season was particularly insisted upon; and the evil of not knowing that it leadeth men to repentance represented as a cause of deep humiliation before God: to me it should be matter of deep regret, the want of feeling and affection, the want of faith and hope, the want of an ardent and operative gratitude. The Lord hath been a God of mercy unto me, he is dealing wondrously with me in all my concerns, and I am not without an impression of the countenance of his favour, for he hath said, "I will never leave thee." What manner of person then ought I to be? "but the good which I would, I do not:" Rejoice, my soul, in hope, the day of thy redemption draweth nigh. Meanwhile, as a monument of God's forbearing mercy, let me have much labour, pray much, praise much, preach much, and never count on any trouble or any expense for his sake,

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who remembereth his covenant and his servants, and is faithful to his promise. I would not presumptuously express my feelings and my hopes; but my heart does not deceive me in the choice I have so often made, and in my present, and all my former declarations of adherence unto it. What though I meet with grievances and difficulties?—it is enough; God is mine—"all things are yours"—the sanctified use of all things is the believer's privilege, and ought to be his comfort. I am again at the close of another year—what, O my God, shall I render for the unwearied and multiplied expressions of thy goodness? I can make no returns of beneficence, nor of any kind; but as thou art pleased to uphold me, and by thy power I will go on in thy service, and expect in the end to behold thy face in righteousness, through the grace of the Redeemer, who loved me, and gave himself for me—though weak in faith, I subscribe to it,

ROBERT SMIRREFF.

Tranent, Feb. 18, 1811.—I am a wonder to myself. Blessed be God, a sense of his goodness, I think, penetrates my heart, and constrains me to say, "What shall I render?" what! my poor self! yes, and all that I have—the Lord does not forsake me. Yet vain vexing thoughts work in my mind, and keep me almost in continual fear and agitation. Draw nigh to my soul and redeem it; deliver me because of mine enemies. Alas! that any of these little things should move me. My course has been of considerable length; it may soon be run out; let me so run as to obtain, and, notwithstanding fears and discouragements, let me proceed in the fear of my good master in a firm dependence on the sufficiency of his grace, and with a full prospect of his coming to me at death, which is

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sure, and may be near; let all things be ready—as a duty, I would arrange and settle my temporal concerns, a sketch of which I am going to look over, and mean to transcribe, alter, and correct, as seems to me fair and necessary. To deeds of this kind good men have been attentive; the divine will is, "set thine house in order." Would God that in all things I may be honest and conscientious. So help me, O Lord.

Transent, March 21, 1811. *Sacramental Fast, also a day of national humiliation.*—Served this day alone. Some general thoughts in the forenoon on Rom. vi. 21. and preached in the afternoon from Isaiah xlv. 9. Was carried through, to God be the praise. Now I desire to look into my heart, and to look up unto my God—in my heart there is, I hope, some good thing—yes, there is, if I am not deceived, some knowledge, some faith, some love, some desire; I bless God for it, and would be still asking of him more abundant communications of his special goodness: my feelings at present are such, that I am shut up to a constant dependence upon him—I do take thee, O Lord, to be my God, Christ is my Saviour, and the Spirit is my sanctifier, and a three-one God is my hope and my all. He will not fail me, nor forsake me—in defiance of vexing and unbelieving thoughts, I will trust and not be afraid. I purpose in his strength to go on in his service, making mention of his righteousness, waiting for his salvation, and looking for his appearance. My great object in my Christian and ministerial course is to glorify his name; and that in the way of my duty I may be assisted, comforted, and succeeded. I would on this occasion make a surrender of my poor self unto him, and cast all my cares

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upon him; confident that he is and will be my God for ever and ever, and my guide even unto death. Having done so, my request is, that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, may keep my mind; and that through Jesus Christ this may be all my attainment, "kept in perfect peace. Amen."

Tranent, May 23, 1811. *Thursday morning, seven o'clock.*—Feel anxious and perplexed, full of vexing thoughts, and made unhappy with fears and apprehensions. Woe's me, that I cannot be patient and forbearing; whatever the occasion may e, in the distance or disrespect of some from whom I might expect friendship and attachment. Yet I must condemn myself—it becomes me to be more severe and unforgiving in condemning myself than any other person, and never to speak with so much bitterness against the faults of others as my own. Cannot I form enlightened and benevolent views of human nature, and under the influence of religious principle, tolerate deviations from the rules of behaviour, and forgive neglects in the intercourse of friendship? Should I not remember the manner in which the most innocent have been used? and ought I not to consider him who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself? But of what am I complaining? of being a little overlooked, a little neglected, and a little discouraged in the way of my duty. One man inattentive, another disrespectful, a third capricious and wavering in his manner, &c. But may not such occurrences be expected? and must I not lay my account with them? God deals mercifully with me; others meet with heavier troubles—the Lord enable me to encourage myself in him alone.—Mean men are vanity—my soul wait thou on the Lord.

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Tranent, July 25, 1811. Sacrament Fast evening.—The services of the day, with the day itself, are coming to a close. My life is wearing on, and will soon reach its end; but it becomes me to serve while opportunity is afforded, and to work while the day lasts. Yes; the Lord will not forsake me, and through his grace I will not leave him. But whose am I? and whom am I serving? O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, "I am thy servant!" This is what I am in my Christian character, and in my ministerial capacity. I feel myself inclined to his service, pleased with it; frequently comforted in it, hitherto supported, and not without a hope of future assistance and support, till my life and warfare are concluded. It is my desire, which the Master I serve will fulfil, that I may serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. I would on this occasion make a fresh surrender of myself unto the Lord, devoting soul and body, time and talents, and all that I am or have, unto the Lord; I would be his only, wholly, and for ever; I cast my family, and give up my flock unto him, and I will wait in confidence of seeing the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Conscious of much weakness, I retain the Lord as my strength; of much guilt, I take him for my righteousness; of much pollution, I view him as my sanctification; and of great misery, I accept of him for my redemption—in me there is nothing but emptiness and imperfection, but I am complete in him. These are my prayers and my sentiments, accompanied with a good hope that they shall be realized and established; faithful is he who hath called me, who also will do it. I put my name to these things, as I would do to what I know and wish to be true;

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and expect that the Lord will not forget the poor man, his unworthy servant, ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Jan. 1, 1812.—It is God who has kept me alive to this day—the first day of another year. I would enter upon it with sentiments and prayers of gratitude and humility, thankful for past mercies, humble for past miscarriages, and solicitous for farther blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. My case is necessitous; the wants of it are many and urgent, and the aids from above alone are sufficient for it. I will not despair. God says to every believer, as he said to Abraham, "I am the almighty God." Depending upon his sufficiency, I hope to be carried through difficulties and duties, and taught of God. I would trust in him for wisdom, prudence, and patience, in ordering my conversation aright, that I may be useful to some, bear with others, and sit loose to all. Perhaps this year I may die; well, if it is the will of God, why not? my pilgrimage has been prolonged beyond many of my cotemporaries; and having, if my heart deceive me not, faith in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, death will be my gain, and heaven my home; all other things I leave to a covenanted God.

Tranent, Feb. 6, 1812. *Sacramental Fast, kept on a national fast.*—Had some assistance to-day; preached also myself—the Lord water the seed sown. Have of late been frequent, and, I hope, sincere in my acceptance of the Lord to be my God: I am warranted to call him my God, and have done it in the sincerity of my heart. I do it again, and let it be recorded on high. He is my God, and my Father, and the Rock of my

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salvation. I feel my heart to be for God, my desire towards him, my dependence upon him, my expectations from him. I can adopt David's expressions in many of his Psalms, and make them my own, calling the Lord my rock, my fortress, &c. Truly my soul waiteth for the Lord; my salvation is from him. I will not distrust him upon this occasion; I will go in his strength, and expect to see his goodness and to be satisfied with it. Ps. xxxvi. 8. Jer. xxxi. 14. My death may be near, I wish to make it familiar to my mind, and to fortify myself against the terrors of it, and all the consequences of it; and nothing, I am convinced, can do this more effectually than faith in the promises of God, and in the death of Christ, whom I do take to be my Lord and my God, to redeem me from death, and to ransom me from the power of the grave. It strikes me, too, that he will not forsake me while I live. Hitherto he hath been a God of mercy unto me; his word warrants me to hope for the continuance of his merciful loving kindness; and believing, I will go on my way rejoicing. The Lord say to my soul, "I am thy salvation, I am God Almighty." Walk before me, that with ease and satisfaction I may proceed in my Christian and ministerial services, till my course is finished, and my race is run; then may I comfortably fall asleep in Jesus, in hope of his coming to receive me unto himself, that where he is, &c. &c. (Text, Sabbath, John xiv. 3.) I close these thoughts, putting my name unto them; and subscribing myself, however unworthy, the humble servant of the best of masters.

ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, April 1, 1812.—Still I feel my poor shattered frame more than ordinarily deranged. Owing

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to this, and to the inclemency of the weather, I am prevented from attending a funeral at Haddington, and a general meeting of the society friendly to the conversion of the Jews—have sent my donation, along with that of two others, by an acquaintance. This, and all similar institutions amongst us and in other countries, appear to me eminently calculated, with the divine blessing, for the good of mankind; they merit encouragement, and it is pleasing to see they are meeting with it. Those, I observe, amongst ministers and people who are most distinguished for their piety and purity are the men who interest themselves in their prosperity, and pray that they may have God-speed. Have been and am reading Dr. Buchanan's Sermons and Researches. What an extraordinary man! what a blessing to his fellow-men and fellow-Christians! much of a good spirit is apparent in him. How God provides and qualifies instruments for serving himself and his people! I have thought what an illustrious character is his compared with the most renowned among the infidel tribe; the one poisoning and destroying the human race, the other preaching, and writing, and travelling, for improving it in science and religion, to make men wise for time and eternity. One thing is very observable, an unfeigned respect for the Bible, and an earnest desire that all should possess it. Multitudes want this invaluable blessing; but the exertions of the day will be subservient to their advantage, and send them a gift more precious than the gold of Ophir. In this respect I regard the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the many auxiliary societies, as institutions of great excellence and utility; they will go on and increase, till the darkest regions are illuminated, and the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord as

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the waters cover the sea. There are loud calls given us—deaths are frequent—one in one place, and one in another—I know not how soon there may be one here, the Lord knows, and let me wait his time.

Tranent, July 23, 1812. *Sacrament Fast evening.*—Have been rather in heaviness this day. Our spirits rise and fall, our frames are lively and languid, there are changes in our condition, but none in our state; our God is the same, and our faith and hope in him cannot be frustrated. I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Intend on Sabbath to preach from these words, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever." What an honourable alliance! what a happy relation! My soul, art thou betrothed unto the Lord? It is satisfying to think of a renunciation of other lords, and of a cordial acquiescence with the proposal made. My heart is won, my consent is obtained; and, O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, "*Thou art my Lord.*" My heart may deceive me, but, Lord, thou that knowest all things, knows that there is no known nor allowed hypocrisy in this profession, I hope in the Lord, and will be his humble devoted servant all the days of my life; nor will the Lord put me away. Hitherto he hath strengthened and helped, and this day he hath been saying unto me, "Fear not, for I am thy God." What remains but faith in the promise, and confidence in the Promiser, that it shall be as God hath spoken. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Amen.

Tranent, March 11, 1813. *Evening.*—National fast. The opportunity taken as usual for a congregational fast previous to the dispensation of the Lord's supper.

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This is intended on Sabbath first. Was by myself this day—preached twice—did not feel great freedom in the delivery, but felt easy and comfortable in prayer. The morning prayer to-day and last Sabbath was the solace and satisfaction of my soul; would to God that all who joined with me might experience that the Lord is good to his servants and suppliants; and that we may in every prayer of ours, and in every preaching, know that life is in his favour, and happiness in his countenance. Now in solitude, and by myself, I bewail the earthliness of my mind, the carnality of my affections, and the corruption of my heart: if I am deceived, or disappointed, or imposed upon in earthly things, why should it surprise or grieve me? rather let me bear it, and wait on the Lord, attentive to his will and my duty, and believe he will take care of me and mine. Even in this respect he hath been mindful of me. My great object is the service of God, and the present and future enjoyment of him. With this view, I commit myself unto him, and resign all my concerns unto him. That I have done, and will do, and will never undo. Can I doubt it? God has wrought in me a will to do what is good, and an ability in some measure to practise it. Never more comfortable than when about my Father's business. Praying, preaching, and studying, when I can pray and preach and study, are the solace and delight of my soul! What at this time, and at all times, I request, may be my enjoyment. God said unto Daniel by an angel, "O man, justly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee." Amen.

Transent, July 22, 1813. *Fast morning, eight o'clock.* —Have been musing and praying, and looking into the word, and into my own heart. Much weakness,

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and wickedness, and many wants, present themselves unto me. Feel an impression of my need of the pardoning and purifying grace of God, and of his help in the services incumbent upon me. Remember not against me former iniquities; help me, O God of my salvation. Put gladness into my heart, life into my soul, warmth into my affections, and energy into my prayers.

Tranent, Dec. 2, 1813. Thanksgiving.—Thanksgiving is our duty, and ought to be our delight; it glorifies God; it praises his goodness; as a religious service, it has been followed with the divine acceptance, and blessed with the divine countenance. 2 Chron. v. 13, 14. We were employed this day in the above work, particularly on account of the goodness of God in the fruitful season. Providence has been very smiling and gracious in an abundant harvest; we have already felt the effects of it, and cannot sufficiently express our thankfulness, but should aim at our duty in uttering abundantly the memory of his great goodness. As an individual in my private character, and in my ministerial office, it becomes me above many to thank and praise the Lord.

Last Sabbath, the 28th of the month, was my birthday. Spared to this day in the long suffering of God, and upheld in his service; the use of my reason, the faculties of my mind, and the strength of my body, are in some measure continued. Carried on, too, now many years in the work of the ministry, and supported amidst much weakness; this it becomes me to remark with peculiar gratitude, and should, as a proof of it, be every day more fervent, more active, and more interested in honouring God my Saviour, and feeding the church which he hath purchased with his

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own blood. Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus, lately explained in the ordinary course of my lecturing, has, I think, been of use to me—the Lord dispose me to consider and imitate. Received, since I began this note, a letter informing me of the death and interment of a connexion, a man much younger than me, cut off in the possession of riches—But he is gone. We have in prospect the celebration of the Lord's supper on Sabbath first. I have sought the Lord, and would hope he will be very gracious; not that I merit any thing, but he delights in mercy, and hath magnified his word above all his name. My views, my sentiments, my feelings, remain unchanged; and all, I hope, unite in determining me to choose the Lord to be my God, and to cleave unto him all the days of my life; which, through his grace, I will do. I would say to him as Ittai said to David, "Surely in what place the Lord my King shall be, whether in life or in death, even there also will thy servant be," 2 Sam. xv. 21. Amen. R. SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Dec. 6, 1813.—The Lord has not left me destitute of his mercy and truth. In speaking of the building up of mercy in the church triumphant, my heart was warmed, and my mouth opened; the feeling was pleasant, and the recollection is sweet, but the enjoyment will be infinitely better than both. Built on the sure foundation, the building will prosper till it is perfect; the very hand that laid the foundation will finish it; he will bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, "grace, grace unto it." I would begin the joyful acclamation, and hope to make it in life, at death, and through all eternity. Let me improve the experience of the divine goodness in gratitude, love, and expectation;

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endeavouring to be more thankful, more affectionate, and more confident, that the Lord will continue his loving kindness, and carry me through all the future scenes of life. I often feel low and irritable, and need to wait patiently, bearing with the infirmities of others, and not unfrequently very discouraged and distressful; but the Lord has been with me, and supports me, and may I not trust in him at all times, and expect similar trials, similar deliverances, and similar mercies, with those which I have already experienced: this is, I think, what I may look for in the present state; but I am warranted to think the Lord will not fail me nor forsake me. He hath said, "I am with thee, I am thy God, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

"Engraved, as in eternal brass,
The mighty promise shines;
Nor shall the powers of darkness raze
The everlasting lines."

Amen.

Tranent, July 28, 1814. Sacrament Fast evening.—I would write as I feel, and record the sentiments of my heart; not dealing falsely with God, nor deceiving myself. I believe I am a sinner, and I feel the remains of corruption strong and operative; iniquities prevail against me, the evils which I would not, these I do, but I cannot do the things which I would. With other saints in a like case, I feel, I hope, an ardent desire for the salvation of God: my soul hasteneth to the Lord, and expresseth its hope of redemption from all its sins. Nor am I destitute of some reason to expect this redemption; the Redeemer is my choice, he is precious to my soul, I love his saving name, and have experienced the power of his

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grace, and the joys of his salvation. No, no; it is neither delusion nor enthusiasm. Truly God is good to Israel, his goodness endureth continually. I will go on in expectation from it, for he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. Gracious desires coming from him, and centering in him, must be acceptable unto him, and will be fulfilled by him. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry. It is in my heart to look unto the Lord, and to rest upon him. His promise is, "I will be your God, I will be your Father, I will be your Saviour;" and I will cry unto him, "Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation." What else does my profession, my ministry, and my appearance at his table say? I would God that on this occasion my heart may be enlarged, and my lips opened, to speak of that most transcendent commendation he hath given of his love, in Romans v. 8. (Action Sermon Text.) The Lord aid me. Amen.

Tranent, Nov. 28, 1814.—My hopes have not been disappointed, the Lord hath not forsaken me; trusting in him, I have been helped, and my heart shall rejoice in his salvation. I may not be able to say he hath dealt bountifully with me; but I can and will say, he hath been very gracious to me, ordaining strength and perfecting praise out of my mouth under great ears and discouragements. This is my infirmity. But I will remember what the Lord hath wrought, and would encourage myself in him. He hath upheld me, and he will guide me till he receive me. Yet it is fit that I should make the most humiliating confession before him; weak as a child, ignorant and foolish as a beast, yet not left, not forsaken, nor will

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be. He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Honours, riches, relations, health, strength, life, will forsake me, but my God never will. In this faith I will work, serve, suffer, live and die. Amen.

This is my birth-day; the Lord hath kept me alive till this day. Often threatened, still spared—what shall I render? The Lord be magnified, and grant me grace to hold on during my appointed time, that I may finish my course with joy, and be able to say, "I have glorified thee on earth."

Jan. 28, 1815.—Still a very stormy day. God hath set all the borders of the earth, and hath made summer and winter; he gives snow like wool, and scatters hoar-frost like ashes. These are his operations whom nature obeys, and whose praise fire, hail, snow, vapour, and stormy winds declare. Let them elevate my mind to God, and encourage me to rejoice in his greatness. How transporting the thought! the great, the mighty, the almighty Lord is our God, and will be our sure and all-sufficient help! To-morrow a large audience cannot be expected, nor would it be for edification to prolong the public services. We serve an indulgent Master, he does not require us to do ourselves any harm in his service; he knows our bodily infirmities, and does not exact more of us than we are enabled to perform. The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them. He will continue his goodness, pitying, and protecting, and helping me, his poor unworthy servant, who feels an attachment to his service which he would not exchange for worlds.

July 1, 1815.—Conscious I am to myself of innu-

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merable infirmities and imperfections. However fair my Christian and ministerial character may be before men, yet in the sight of God it is grievously defiled. I am a man of unclean heart and lips; I cannot justify myself, I must look to the blood of sprinkling, and seek that faith which purifies the heart, and works by love. The Lord, I trust, will be merciful to my unrighteousness, and give me an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Meanwhile, being made a Christian and a minister, and obtaining help of God, I will not be disobedient; like Paul, I would attend to the work to which I am called, witnessing to all that hear me that Christ suffered and died, and rose again, and is ordained of God to be his salvation to the Jews and to the Gentiles, and to the ends of the earth. In this great work I will hope in his mercy, and pray for his presence, thankful for what he hath wrought in me, and by me; and am hopeful that he will still stand by me till my life and my labours are finished. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end." Amen. "This is a faithful saying."

Sept. 5, 1815.—This day the synod meets. Particular occurrences forbid my attendance. The Lord preside over and guide our spiritual judges in their deliberations, and bring them to an honourable and successful issue. The good of the church in its relation to the interests of Christianity and the glory of Christ, is an important object. May ecclesiastical discussions and ministerial instructions be to the Lord for a name and an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off.—So may the Lord grant.

Tranent, Nov. 28, 1815. *Birth-day.*—In the recur-

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rence of this day, what ought to be the sentiments, the feelings, and the desires of my soul? how thankful for the past, how humble for the present, and how dependent for the future? Whatever may be in the purpose and providence of God concerning me, I will, on the footing of his promise, and by the aids of his grace, go forward, believing, serving, and suffering, according to his will. Not knowing the future incidents of my life, whether personal or domestic, I cannot be wrong; nay, I must be right in chusing the Lord to be my guide, my guard, my shield, and my exceeding great reward; persuaded that even death shall not be able to break the connexion, nor to make a separation between me and him whom my soul loveth. In testimony of my faith and hope in God through Christ, I put my name to this writing, on this the day of my birth, not without some reason to assure myself that my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Feb. 19, 1816.—I often feel feeble and sore broken; my bodily frame is much broken and shattered, and, as I may expect, verging towards dissolution. Be it so; when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, there is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where, with all the saints, we shall flourish in immortal youth, always lively, always vigorous, and always in a capacity for the services in which we shall be employed. Still, however, I am upheld; the Lord does not silence me, nor take me away, nor number me with the dead: he hath kept me alive to this day, continuing me in his service, graciously proportioning my strength to my day. But what do I suffer in the foresight of my duty through my weakness, despon-

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dency, and distrust? This is is my infirmity. I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. In the prospect of another sacramental solemnity, I would trust in the Lord, and go forward. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;" he will direct, assist, and support me, and make his grace sufficient for me. I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord. None of his servants are suffered to continue by reason of death; one of them, Mr. Henderson of Dunbar, is removed after a course of about fifty years, and is now silent in the dust. So must I be at the appointed time; till then, the Lord continue his loving kindness unto me, that by his help I may be enabled to serve him and my generation according to his will.

Tranent, Nov. 28, 1816. *Congregational Fast and Thanksgiving.*—Sacrament to be dispensed on Sabbath. Heard two of our preachers, promising young men, who, I hope will be enabled to serve God in the Gospel of his Son. In my closet and retirement, I acknowledge myself to be a sinner; but a sinner resting on the Saviour, and hoping to be saved by grace. This is my birth-day; I am still preserved in the long suffering of God, now upwards of threescore years, and more than the half of these in the ministry. O what a miracle of mercy! what a proof that the Lord is good and slow to anger. An end will come, it has come to three of our brethren in the association since the commencement of this year; and what know I who shall be the next? perhaps the writer. Be it so; the Lord, I trust, will make me willing, and enable me to glorify him in death and life. My desire is, that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death; only if the

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Lord pleases to spare me, may I be blessed, and become more and more a blessing to my family, my flock, and to all with whom in my little circle I may have any intercourse; such, if I know myself, are my views and wishes. I would be sincere before him under whose eye I am, and in token of it, I add my name; amid all the varieties of my lot, adhering to my God, ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Dec. 2. Monday.

"O how shall words with equal warmth
The gratitude declare
That glows within my ravish'd heart?
But thou canst read it there."

There is, I must say, a feeling of gratitude in my cold heart for the favour shewn me yesterday. Was carried through my work in the various parts of it with some degree of firmness and liveliness, and, may I indulge the hope, not altogether without some advantage to myself and my hearers. Spoke of our sacramental supper under the emblem of a feast, from Nahum i. 15. "O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts." Did, and do think, with satisfaction on the goodness of the Lord in making a feast of fat things for us. Let me not cease to pray that the Lord would look on Zion, the city of our solemnities: may the refreshment so graciously vouchsafed be an occasion of the highest praise to the Maker and Master of the feast, and an encouragement to me and others to pursue with increasing vigour our journey to the better country, where, with eternal delight, we shall feast for ever in the presence of God and the Lamb. May these things be ever present to my recollection, felt after many days, and experienced in all their sweetness in the last moments of my life. Amen and amen.

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Tranent, June 7, 1817.—Have done for this evening with my preparation for to-morrow. Still I am afraid, over-anxious, and unbelieving, as if my resources were in myself. Contrary to what I have experienced a thousand times, that when best prepared I have been most straitened and difficulted, that I may not trust in myself, but in the living God, who has said, "I will not leave thee, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." O that, in the faith of these words, I could be strong and very courageous in my ministerial labours, turning neither to the right nor to the left, that I may prosper in all that I do, and whithersoever I go. A feeling of my own weakness, and a sense of the need of divine aid, are ever present to my mind; the impression is constant, and, I hope, from the Lord, who is my sure and all-sufficient help. The following is a good word: "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper." O my soul, believe and rejoice, and cast away all thy unbelieving fears. Amen. Faithful is the promise.

Tranent, Nov. 20, 1817.—Day of thanksgiving, humiliation, and prayer, observed on this day, and regarded by us as preparatory to the Lord's Supper on Sabbath first. With this view, hints were suggested, and prayers were offered in the public exercises of it. Now I am by myself, I have, I think, feelings of the divine goodness, a desire to be thankful, and a wish to be useful. God's patience and forbearance towards myself occur to me as a dispensation which should be met with admiration, and celebrated with praise. Often before, and this evening again, David's pious resolution of blessing the Lord while he lived, and singing praises to his God while he had any being,

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forms the purpose I would lay down, and the plan I would pursue for myself—yes, by the grace of God I will. It is in my heart, and I hope God has put it there, to seek his face, to walk in his ways, and to cleave unto him living and dying. I desire on this occasion to repeat my surrender of myself unto him, resigning soul and body, life and property, children and people, into his hands. Death may be at the door, I may not have another opportunity of drinking of the fruit of the vine in the church on earth. God grant me this as an occasion of comfort and assurance that I shall drink it new with my Saviour in his Father's kingdom. I know not the time of my death, it is fit I should be at the disposal of God, but I may express my wish that death may find me willing to die, longing to depart, and able to say, "I have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" not overwhelmed with cares about those I may leave behind me, resting in the Lord that he will take care of them. His promise is, "thy God, and the God of thy seed, I will preserve them, and be a Father unto them:" I will add, and let my gracious God say so too, "I will be with thee, I will meet with thee, and make thee joyful in my house of prayer." I know not how it is, but I feel that mind and memory, judgment and reflection, all fail me if the Lord does not warm my heart, and enlarge my affections in his service. Not the want of preparation, but I dread rather the excess of it, with a leaning to dependence upon it, is the cause of my occasional depression. I leave it to God, not wishing to trust in myself, but in the aids of his spirit, and the sufficiency of his grace.

Nov. 22, 1817. *Saturday, twelve o'clock.*—Now

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having done what appears to me to be my duty, in writing, in meditating, and preparing for my ministerial services to-morrow, I would account it a happy attainment to be delivered from all anxious and unbelieving thoughts, and to have my heart fixed trusting in the Lord. I cannot, I ought not, I will not, trust in myself. I will again say of the Lord, "he is my refuge, my fortress, and my God, in him will I trust." He is my lamp, and will lighten my darkness; he is my strength, and will strengthen me for my duty; why then, my soul, this heaviness, and why these gloomy anticipations? Chide thyself for them, argue thyself out of them, rise above them, and exult in thy God. Painful experience tells me at times of depressions and desertions; but the promise assures me they are neither final, nor of long continuance. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee;" his anger endureth but a moment, but in his loving kindness there is continuance, and I shall be saved. Let me remember the years (the changes) of the right hand of the Most High, and encourage myself to hope, that though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning. The burden of Dumah is very descriptive of the varieties and changes of the Christian life: "Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? the morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come." Yes, Lord, and I do come to thee with professions of humility and unworthiness, but with hopes and expectations of thy great goodness.

Tranent, Dec. 10. 1817. *Wednesday, eleven o'clock.* Must see the hand of God—would recognise it in present occurrences, and wish to acquiesce with the will

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of God in all things that concern me. I feel at present, and have felt for some days past, much relaxed and broken in body and mind, as if my poor frame were to be shaken to pieces. Yet the Lord is gracious—found him so on Sabbath, particularly in all parts of my duty. He does not, no, he does not forsake them that truly seek his face, and trust in his promise. O that I could praise him for his goodness, and still rejoice in hope that he will remember me for good according to the greatness of his mercy. I am afraid I offend—I may be impatient, and may speak unadvisedly at times, but the Lord knoweth what is in me, and what I would be; he knoweth our frame, and will not be severe to mark our iniquities. Were it his will to strengthen me in body and mind, and to re-establish my health, I would that this new favour should be to him for a name, and to me for an occasion of further usefulness before the time of my departure; but if it is otherwise in his holy purpose, I beg to be resigned to the will of the Lord. "Not my will but thine be done; yet, Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me." But here am I, making David's choice, and presenting his prayer, "Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his tender mercies are very great. Amen.

Tranent, Dec. 27, 1817. *Two o'clock.*—I feel still much broken and oppressed, but the Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble. I do not see how I am to be able for any thing to-morrow, unless he is graciously pleased to interpose. I would not choose to tempt Providence, yet he hath so often made me strong out of weakness, that I am encouraged to go forward under many discouragements. I hope still he will be gracious, and fit me for what is

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incumbent upon me. I would also have my eye to him for strength to suffer; my distresses are occasionally heavy, but his grace is sufficient for me; and I pray for the liberal communication of it, that I may serve him in my office, and glorify him even in the furnace of affliction. Amen.

Tranent, Jan. 13, 1818. *One o'clock.*—Of each of the various incidents of life, it may be remarked, "this is the finger of God." What wisdom, what sovereignty, and what goodness, are displayed in the operations of his hand! One man has his trials of one kind, a second has his of another, and so on in an endless variety; but of all men it is universally true that they are of few days, and full of trouble. I must observe, and ought to praise the mercies of the Lord in his providential conduct towards myself. Not without many infirmities and afflictions, as may be seen in these little notes; yet the merciful agency of God is singularly conspicuous in them. It is wonderful in my eyes that I am upheld in my public work on the holy Sabbath, though sometimes so enfeebled and oppressed, that I can scarcely move or breathe. He gives me ability so as to be heard, and strengthens me for attending to my duty, so that frequently in the pulpit I forget my weakness, and feel myself strong in the Lord, pleased with his service, thankful for his kindness, and hopeful that I am not labouring in vain. I must regret that my inability for walking prevents me from seeing the congregation at large, and visiting the sick in particular, as I wish to do; but my blessed Master is merciful, and does not expect to reap where he has not sown. Let me be more frequent and fervent in my private addresses, in hopes that the Hearer of prayer will not forget the congre-

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gation of his poor, nor the weak instrument he continues to oversee them.

Have heard of the death of another of my fellow labourers, and of one who has been for some time visited with a paralytic stroke, both younger than myself in the ministry; yet the Lord spares the unworthy writer, and enables him to do a little, though far short of what is incumbent. Nor shall I die, but, one way or another, live and declare the works of the Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve. R. SHIRREFF.

Tranent, Jan. 31, 1818.—I would be ever raising a memorial to the divine goodness—think myself sometimes so overwhelmed with a feeling of it, that I want expressions to utter my thoughts, and anticipate the work of heaven, where we will utter the mighty acts of the Lord, and shew forth his praises according to all that we can desire. It is a persuasion habitual in my mind, that a life of fellowship with a gracious, and righteous, and merciful God, is the happiest and the best. I say this from any little experience I have of it, and would be better and better acquainted with it. Alas! that ever I should offend. Is there not a cause? When the beloved of my soul withdraws himself and is gone, then I condemn myself, and am ashamed of my unkindness to my best friend and benefactor. But he is a merciful God, who does not cast off for ever. Tomorrow I intend to preach on these words, Psalm cxvi. 7. "Return to thy rest, O my soul." To myself and to others, may they be spoken with power. Amen.

Tranent, Feb. 14, 1818. *Saturday.*—I would be for God, and if I have my life prolonged, would em-

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ploy it in his service and shewing forth his praise. To morrow the subject will be a lecture on the xiv. chap. of Job, and a sermon on Psalm xlviii. 14. "This God is our God for ever and ever," &c. I have spoken on similar subjects, and often used the same words in prayer, "That this God may be our God," &c. I trust there is something in them as applied to myself; and my desire is, that I may be enabled to recommend him sincerely and affectionately to the choice of all that may hear me, that they and I may have pleasing and appropriating views of him as our gracious, and righteous, and merciful God; the strength of our heart and the rest of our soul finding that satisfaction in him which is in vain looked for from the broken cisterns of earthly enjoyments. Amen.

Tranent, March 9, 1818. *Monday morning.*—The Lord is sovereign—he may do as he pleaseth—let me humbly submit to his will. Did not feel that enlargement in his service which would have been gratifying to my heart. Must however be thankful—though straitened, particularly in the sermon, I was upheld. He might have made my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and silenced me before all the people. I purpose still to adhere to my master and his service, and will cherish the hope that he will be gracious to me according to his mercies and the multitude of his loving kindnesses.—The Lord will not cast off for ever.

Tranent, March 14, 1818. *Saturday.*—No, I will not despair—I will look again to his holy temple. Feel a desire to please him; but, alas! in me there is so much corruption and carnality, that he might justly abhor me, and cast me off for ever. "But I will

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not forsake thee," is his gracious promise, and my experience confirms it. Even when deserted and left to feel my own deadness, he does not utterly leave me; I may well say, "so foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee:" nevertheless, would add, "I am continually with thee—thou hast holden me by my right hand—thou shalt guide me by thy counsel." Feeble and faultering, and not without some hesitation, I express this to be my faith and hope, which the Lord ripen into assurance. Blessed with this view, it is my duty to wait and to submit. But, woe's me, the workings of the sin that dwelleth in me. Lord, how long; when shall the adversaries without and within me be bruised under my feet? when shall I rise above and be freed from the many that fight against my soul, and prevent me from loving and serving thee as I ought and wish to do? Am to preach to-morrow on Psalm cxvi. 9. "I will walk before the Lord," &c. Recommending a life of piety and circumspection as under the eye, in the presence, in fellowship with God, and conformity to his will, as the happiest and the best. And O that I may experience it in my Christian and ministerial services, thinking with delight on the things of God, speaking with power about them, and manifesting in my conduct a holy, humble, and heavenly conversation. I love my master, and will live and die in his service; and blessed be God, my attachment to his work is unabated, and will, I trust, rather increase than diminish.

Tranent, April 11, 1818. *Saturday.*—Have now done with my preparation work for to-morrow; but the Lord knows, and I may know, that without help from above, my labours are unprofitable. I

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would not wish to serve God with that which cost me nothing, but there is danger of a spirit of independence and pride, from which I beg to be delivered, and taught to place my confidence on the mighty God of Jacob, who is the saving strength of his anointed. I tremble at the thought of being left to myself, I will not indulge it, since the faithful Promiser hath said, "*I will never leave thee.*" Would God also that the young ones around me were taught of the Lord, and that those of mine own household were moved betimes by his spirit; I see nothing openly wicked in them, but O that there were more evident symptoms of the grace of God in them; as also in the members of our church, and in all to whom I minister in holy things. Am still insisting on prayer from Luke xviii. The duty is necessary and important; I would pray and recommend prayer in the name of Christ, and by the help of the Spirit, for the mercies promised to us in the covenant, and given to them that ask the God of all grace.

Tranent, May 2, 1818. *Saturday.*—It becomes me to acquiesce with the divine will. Have been indisposed this week; a pain in one of my sides, which had been giving me uneasiness for some time, rose suddenly to a violent height on Sabbath morning last, and made me unable for my usual services on that day. The congregation was dismissed after the forenoon worship. It has been and continues to be easier, and I ought to be thankful. Have sometimes, I think, a grateful feeling of the happiness of heaven, where the redeemed shall be fully adequate to utter the mighty acts of the Lord, and to shew forth all his praises, at least so far as they are competent to the work. For the present let us praise him in the high-

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est degree, and let every thing that hath breath unite in the same exercise. Anticipating the songs of eternity, let us sing in the valley of tears, the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Have an assistant to-morrow—the work will devolve upon him: would wish to pray publicly if it may be conveniently done, this however is at present unresolved; the Lord will do, as it well becomes him, with his own what he will. Let David's language be mine: "Surely I have behaved myself, and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of its mother; my soul is even as a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever."

Tranent, July 23, 1818. *Fast-day morning.*—Experienced much of the divine goodness on Sabbath—was supported in the public services of it, and even carried comfortably through them. "Not unto me, not unto me, but unto his name be all the glory." Let me take this is as a token for good, and an anticipation of continued encouragement in the work of the Lord. This day I feel pretty well in my bodily frame, but not without some derangement and confusion in my mind. Occurrences in the present imperfect state, both of a private and public nature, may be expected to give a minister uneasiness; but whatever they are, he hath a good master to whom to seek, and to whom to commit his cause. This is what I would do; casting myself in all my Christian and ministerial concerns on an almighty and all-sufficient arm which is able to bear, to save, and to help. As a poor sinner, I look unto the Lord for mercy; and as a weak unworthy servant of his, I hope in his promise, "Lo, I am with you always."

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Same day. Evening.—Yes, I have been endeavouring to give myself over unto the Lord, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, and possessing that eternal life, which is the fruit of his purchase, and the happiness of his people. O what a felicity! But is it mine? an interesting inquiry. Let me not deceive myself; no, I am not in a delusion: the Author of this eternal life hath long been dear to my soul, the blessings it contains are the objects of my acceptance, the way in which it is communicated is agreeable to my mind, and the possession of it here and hereafter will, I am satisfied, be the essence of the happiness of its possessor. Adequate to his wishes, and commensurate to his duration, I consider it as a blessed attainment; interested in it as partially enjoyed in this life, and looking for it as the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ in the life to come. Such are my feelings and sentiments; my judgment approves of them as consistent with the word of God; and I rejoice in hope of seeing his face in righteousness, being conformed to his image, and happy, for ever happy, in his presence. Would God, my faith, my love, my hope, my joy, may receive additional increase and vigour on this occasion; while what is spoke on the subject, Jude 21, (action sermon text,) may be felt by the speaker and his hearers as a word in season to the weary. Amen.

Tranent, July 28, 1818. *Tuesday.*—Nothing noted down since the fast-day; not imputable to indifference, but to a certain impediment not necessary to be recorded. I now sit by myself—the haste, the stir, and the company attending our sacramental solemnities, are past; the ordinances have been observed, and we are left to meditation, prayer, and improve-

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ment. The disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration were soon deprived of Moses and Elias, the cloud that overshadowed them, and the voice that spake unto them, "and when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only." It is well, it is enough, if Jesus be still with us, when his ministers and people, the visible signs of his presence, are removed. On a general review of our past exercises, and of my own feelings in them, I see abundant cause of thanksgiving and joy—the Lord hath been a God of mercy unto me. Felt at the close of the services on Sabbath less fatigued than I often do on ordinary Sabbaths; nor was I unfitted to read and to make some transient remarks on the cxviii. Psalm on Monday; and was succeeded by a brother, who concluded the work with the usual benediction, "and may the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with me, with the people of my charge, and with all our Christian brethren, from this time forth and for ever. Amen." I devolve myself and my charge on "him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before his presence," Jude 24.

Tranent, August 7, 1818. *Friday.*—On Sabbath am to assist at North Berwick—no sermon at home. I trust to the Lord for a safe journey, and for his assistance in my work abroad and at home. Have been this day looking over discourses for the service intended. As usual more anxious I am afraid, than humble and dependent, yet not without hope; the Lord will be my helper and deliverer, and will not leave me to myself. Am now less able to serve him than when in the possession of greater vigour—"he giveth power to the faint." I have my changes, and

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experience the varieties and vicissitudes of the Christian life, but must acknowledge the Lord has been wonderful in his dealings and dispensations. I feel and lament many unworthy thoughts rising in my wicked heart, but the searcher of it knows whence they come, and will not permit me to indulge them, nor lay them to my charge; I wish to be freed from them, and regret that ever I should be harassed with them: My prayer is, "Lord, lead me to thyself, and fill my heart with feelings of love, gratitude, and joy; cause me to inherit substance, and do thou fill my treasures." I am drawing near the end of my life and labours, and it were only desirable to conclude them with much of the divine presence, and many anticipations of the joy which is set before me, "until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my beloved." Amen.

Tranent, Nov. 12, 1818.—This day was kept as a day of thanksgiving; it was also considered as preceding the sacrament of the supper on Sabbath first. Felt, I hope, some glow of gratitude in my heart to the hearer of prayer, and some power of affection in addressing the Father of mercies. But alas! feeble, and languid, and much straitened, in a short discourse on these words, "Be ye thankful." Experiences of this kind teach me humility, self-diffidence, and dependence, not on my own preparations, but on the grace that is in Christ Jesus. To this grace I must look, and in the faith and hope of it I will yet go on, not doubting the faithful promiser, who hath said, "Fear not, I am God Almighty, walk before me." I find it difficult to believe, and am ready to say, "How long wilt thou, O Lord, hide thyself for ever; remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all

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men in vain? where are thy loving kindnesses?" But I must consider that God is a God of judgment, and that the most eminent of the household of faith have had to hope against hope; not staggering at the promise of God, but judging him faithful, thus let me calculate and pray, "Lord, increase my faith." I need now an increased faith, and will seek it, and hope for it, that in the exercise of it I may wait on the Lord with patience, serve him with gladness, and adhere to him with constancy and perseverance. As at this time, I feel often weak and oppressed, but the Lord, I trust, will be my helper, and the glory of my strength; and thus aided, the worm I know will thresh a mountain, the lame take the prey, and the feeble become as David, and David as an angel. I add, be it unto me according to my faith, and may my faith be so invigorated that the glory of the Lord may rest upon me, and diffuse itself all around me, visible to others, and felt by myself.

Tranent, Nov. 14, 1818. *Saturday.*—I doubt not the reality of grace where there are many fears and much heaviness; it has been so with thousands before me, it is, alas! often so with myself. But why art thou cast down? look unto the Lord, be strong in his grace, and confident in his word; remember how on former occasions he hath heard, and helped, and delivered, and put a new song into my mouth; and why should I entertain jealousies and suspicions to the dishonour of my God, and the disquietude of myself? It is true I have been in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; and is it not wisely ordered, lest I should forget myself, and confide in an arm of flesh? Of this I am afraid, and hope the Lord will

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direct me to put my trust in him alone. My Christian and ministerial experience unite in enforcing upon me humility, self-diffidence, and prayer; and thus taught, I will rejoice in the Lord, and hope to see his goodness in the land of the living: "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of the Lord; if thou wilt not believe, surely thou shalt not be established." How often do I vex myself in vain—wherefore am I careful and troubled? —let not relative cares distract me—God is the guide and the guard of his saints, and will watch over them in all places whithersoever they go—be not faithless, cast all thy cares on him that careth for thee. Amen.

Tranent, Nov. 30, 1818.—Saturday last, the 28th, was my birth-day. Hurried then with the immediate prospect of the Sabbath, I would mention now more at leisure the goodness of God in preserving me so long in life, and express the desire of my heart that the time which may yet remain for me may be still devoted to the honour and glory of my preserver and Redeemer. I am sensible of increasing infirmities, and may anticipate my approaching dissolution; but whatever may be the divine will concerning me, it is the desire of my heart that I may be enabled to glorify God, and to finish the work which he hath given me to do. I know his cause will flourish, and his interests will be promoted, when I am silent in the grave; but hope he will not disown one who desires to fear his name, and to advance his glory. Such is the principle within me, a principle which will not be frustrated, and cannot be extinguished. I thought it remarkable that the lecture on Sabbath came to be in the beginning of the third chapter of Job, giving an

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account of that holy man cursing the day of his birth, &c. as if warning me against a similar error. The Lord is good. Amen.

Tranent, Jan. 4, 1819. *Monday.*—O to grace how great a debtor! Reviewing the texts and sermons of the preceding year, the mercies, personal and domestic, and congregational, I must say, "truly God is good." Thinking of his patience and forbearance, what a mercy I am not cut down as a cumberer of the ground, or thrust from the pulpit into the pit. My heart's desire, I hope, is, "that whether I live, I may live unto the Lord, or whether I die, I may die unto the Lord; and that living or dying I may be the Lord's." Text yesterday, Rom. xiv. 8. The Lord enable me to act upon it, to make his word the rule, his work the business, and his glory the end of my life; then dying resigned to the will of the Lord, commending my spirit into his hand, speaking to his praise, and longing to be with himself: this is my request, and, I trust, will be in some measure my attainment during this year, or what time, more or less, he is pleased to spare me. Amen. To this I must add my memorial of acknowledgment, and endeavour to make it, in the import of the word Ebenezer, "not unto me, not unto me, but to the Lord be all the glory." Concerning whom I would say,

> "I'll speak the honour of his name
> With my last labouring breath;
> And, speechless, clasp him in my arms,—
> The antidote of death."

Well, fear not, "I am God Almighty—I will not fail thee nor forsake thee—lo, I am with you." Amen.

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Tranent, Jan. 9, 1819. *Saturday.*—I must, and, I hope, I do admire the sovereignty of the divine goodness to me and my family—young and healthy, and all are spared but one, who died in infancy: now the oldest above twenty, and the youngest turned seven years of age, and still kept in life, and in general good health. Thanks be to God for domestic blessings, that neither the boy nor any of the young women are cut off by death, nor languishing on a bed of sickness: may he who preserves them sanctify and bless them, and continue to keep his good hand about them. This day a brother on the west of us is laying his eldest daughter in the dust, a young woman of amiable dispositions, of good education, and, I hope, of true religion, cut off after a short illness, to the great grief of her parents, with whom I cordially sympathise, and pray that God may be better unto them than many such children. Owing to my feebleness, and the season of the year, I thought it inadvisable, and next to impracticable, for me to attend the funeral. She is now numbered with the dead—perhaps I may be next—be it so; the Lord give me clear views of the King in his beauty, and of the land that is afar off.

Tranent, Feb. 6, 1819. *Saturday.*—Yesterday felt very uncomfortable, unhinged both in body and mind; to-day much relieved, and can, I think, rejoice in hope. The Lord will not cast off his people, nor forsake his inheritance. The impressions of weakness and worthlessness on my mind are habitual, but the worthiness of the Lamb is a balance, and a ground of hope that I shall not be forgotten. No; my desire is, that the Lord may be my strength, my shield, and my exceeding great reward; that my heart may be lifted up in the ways of the Lord, comforted and es-

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tablished in his service, and favoured with success in it; not running in vain, nor labouring in vain, but made the instrument of much glory to God, and of much good to men. To-morrow I intend to preach on Rom. viii. 9. "Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ," &c. My design is, a view of vital Christianity in the heart, which cannot be experienced where there is a want of the spirit of Christ; "whosoever has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." I look forward to next Sabbath, and would have the people to examine themselves in relation to the work in expectation—the Lord countenance and assist. How encouraging to be upheld in my work, and to have the proof in myself that Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light; my feet standing in an even place, and in the congregations blessing the Eternal! compared with this, I would reckon every thing else little and inconsiderable, loss, and dung.

Tranent, March 10, 1819. *Wednesday.*—The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad; he hath preserved us in our church capacity, and kept us in possession of our Christian privileges. I think I have felt individually the meaning of the following words: "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy." Nor have these in the next verse been unimpressed: "He that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." These were consolatory considerations to my soul, accompanied with a persuasion that I have some interest in them. I cannot at this time speak in the lofty language of elevation, but must rather descend into the lowly walks of humility; cast down, but not cast off; faint, yet pursuing, and purposing to go on. My bodily in-

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firmities have been mercifully moderated; so limited, that they have not risen to a greater height; at present they are more pressing than they have been, but our God is merciful, and well knows my frame. Lord, mine eyes are towards thee; guide me by thy counsel, and grant me the cheering and invigorating light of thy countenance, that I may take pleasure in my infirmities, and expect that the power of Christ will rest upon me. Think in mercy, too, on all my poor people; I would hope they are not all receiving the grace of God in vain. May our heavenly Father give us his spirit for the most gracious purposes, and in the most abundant measure. Let us believe and pray, "If ye, being evil," &c. Luke xi. 13. (Action sermon text.)

Tranent, March 14, 1819. *Sabbath.*—Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary, and all thy providences are consistent with thy promises. But how changing are thy dispensations! to me it is so—this day confined to the house, the doors shut, and the people scattered;—last Sabbath permitted to go out, to assemble with the people, and to preach and dispense the sacrament. Feeling much oppressed, and racked for some nights with the cough, I was persuaded to give notice of a vacancy. And why should I complain? God hath done me no wrong, he hath done much good. If I speak, it must be in the language of praise: "He hath not dealt with me after my sins, nor rewarded me according to my iniquities." O God, thou art my God, I will praise thee. In the solitary exercises of the closet, the duties of meditation, prayer, and praise, have been the object of my regard, though so poorly attended to, that I dare hardly mention them. But in prayer I endeavoured to make

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a repeated surrender of myself unto the Lord, taking him on the footing of his word, to be my God; and requesting that he may be the God of my children, and my people. Nor will I despair; he is a promise-performing God; and it shall be to his poor unworthy servant, the writer, according to his word; to which I add my name, and my amen. ROBERT SHIRREFF.

Looking back on some of my notes of the same kind, it is marvellous in mine eyes that I am not taken away; so often chastened, yet not killed; so long dying, yet not dead; to the long suffering of God this is owing. How long this patience may be exercised is unknown to me; but my prayer to the God of my life is, and shall be, that I may be upheld in his service, and become more and more ardent and active in it, preaching the word, and travailing as in pain, till Christ be formed in the souls of my hearers —so help me, O God. Thus may I live; and when the time of my departure is at hand, carry me out of the world exulting and rejoicing.

"O spread thy covering wings around,
Till all my wanderings cease,
And at my Father's lov'd abode
My soul arrives in peace."

Tranent, March 27, 1819. *Saturday, two o'clock.*—Have been trying to encourage myself in the Lord—feel the exercise very difficult, and at the best, as attempted by me, accompanied with many fears and forebodings. Thought of David's experience as recorded in the xviii. Psalm. Happy man! exulting in God as his rock, his fortress, and deliverer; assuring himself the Lord will save the afflicted people,

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lighten his candle, and render him triumphant and victorious. What will he not do? what duty will he not perform? and what enemy will he not resist? or what difficulty will he not overcome? God girded him with strength, and made his way perfect; gave him the shield of his salvation, enlarged his steps, and upheld him with his right hand, that he pursued his enemies, and overtook them, and consumed them. Well might he say, "Who is God save the Lord? who is a rock save our God?" He concludes the Psalm with these memorable words, pregnant with consolation to himself, and to his believing seed in every generation: "Great deliverance giveth he to his king, and sheweth mercy to his anointed; to David, and to his seed for evermore. Amen.

Tranent, April 8, 1819. *Saturday.*—Have been moaning out my complaint unto the Lord, and shewing before him my trouble. Shall it be thus always with me? can I not believe? I cannot otherwise expect to be established. Unbelief is at the root of all my fears—faith in the promises of God establishes, strengthens, and settles—it rests on a solid foundation, and renders the believer firm as a rock, against which the waves of trouble dash and break themselves. He is a wise man who builds his house upon a rock, and may defy the descending rains, the overwhelming floods, and the blowing wind. This, I hope, is what I have done; wherefore then, O thou of little faith, dost thou doubt? rejoice in the Lord, hope perfectly, and go on, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might—the lame take the prey. I have thought of some things for to-morrow on Nehemiah's prayer: "Remember me, O my God, for good; and spare me according to the multitude of thy mercies." The

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Lord, I trust, will be gracious; he hath dealt very mercifully with the children, three of them have been ailing, they are now in a hopeful way. O what shall I say! he wounds and heals, he kills and makes alive; I trace his operations, and observe in them his loving kindness; but in all things I need the aids of his spirit, and will hope in him for them.

Tranent, April 10, 1819. *Saturday.*—Again moaning out my complaint, and presenting my request that I am so distrustful and so unbelieving, and therefore so heavy and languid. My request that the Lord would strengthen my faith, and rejoice my heart; feeling what in unmerited mercy I have often felt, that the Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. He was so on the preceding Sabbath, and he hath been so to us in all our late afflictive visitations; turning our mourning into joy, taking away sickness, and restoring health to us and ours. "They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he saveth them out of their distresses: he sent his word and healed them. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness." I intend, God willing, to-morrow, some thoughts on the four last verses of the iv. chapter of Job for lecture; and on the words of David in the xxv. Psalm, 7th verse, "According to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness, O Lord," for sermon. I know that the way of man is not of himself, and I wish to have no confidence in myself; but mine eyes are to thee, O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. Why not believe? God hath spoken in his holiness—I will rejoice. Fervent superlative love were a desirable attainment; I hope mine is real; Lord make it ardent, powerful, and operative,

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impelling me to any service or suffering for Christ's sake—all too little.

Tranent, May 1, 1819. *Saturday.*—It will occur; seasons of depression and discouragement; my experience tells me so—not forsaken, I will look to the Rock that is higher than I. Who else can relieve, support, and deliver, especially in the deliverance which is promised by a faithful God in the house of many mansions? I am hearing frequently of this deliverance in the case of others, let me expect it in my own, and may the prospect gladden my heart. It pains me to think that my exertions for the honour and interest of my Redeemer should be so few and feeble; but such things have befallen me, that I am dispirited, weakened, and cannot do what I would. The good master, whose I am, and whom I serve, will accept of the will for the deed, and not reckon that for a grievous sin which is felt and lamented as a disallowed infirmity. The power of God to punish sin is terrifying, but the mercy of God to pardon it is encouraging. He hath not, and he will not deal with us according to our iniquities. Expect two young men, incidentally in the place, to preach for me tomorrow; the Lord come forth with them, and speak powerfully and impressively on the hearts of all. Amen.

Tranent, May 5, 1819. *Wednesday.*—Wakened this morning a little before two o'clock, felt the cough severe, and my breathing difficult; suffered much uneasiness for a considerable time: sunk again into sleep, and was somewhat refreshed, but still agitated and enfeebled. Cannot go out as I was intending—be it my attainment to submit to the divine will, and

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to adore God in all his dispensations. Let this suffice me; but were it his holy will to strengthen me in body and mind for glorifying him on earth, and finishing his work, it would gladden my heart, and be an occasion of humble thankful joy in himself. Let me not despair; he hath delivered me in six troubles, and will not forsake me in the seventh. I will pray, "O Lord, be gracious unto me, I have waited for thee; be thou my arm every morning, my salvation also in the time of trouble." Were his present visitations to terminate in the dissolution of my shattered frame, I would not curse God and die; I should, methinks, still mention my confidence in the God of my salvation, and hope to the end that he will never leave me. But, alas! in me there is much unbelief and little faith, and therefore a strong tendency to fear. Lord, be thou my helper, give me comfortable views of the safety of my state, and my interest in thyself. Amen.

Tranent, June 19, 1819. *Saturday.*—In thee, O my Lord, I put my trust, let me not be put to confusion, let me not be ashamed. Feeling my own weakness, and emptied of all dependence on an arm of flesh, I place my hope in thee; and will, in the midst of felt infirmities, rejoice in the expectation of seeing thy goodness in the land of the living. The poor man shall not be disappointed, for his God has said, "my servant shall never be ashamed." It were highly satisfactory to be aided in the work in which I am employed; never so active as I ought to have been, I am now disabled and enfeebled, and cannot exert myself in the work of the Lord. I stir a little among the people of my charge, and can preach a

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little to them, but feel myself so much relaxed that it is not without much pain and difficulty; still, blessed be God, there is a better life before me. What should attach me to this, unless it were to serve God? O that I could serve him with all my might, and with all my heart, and have the sweet experience of his gracious presence always and every day, even to the end. Believe, O my soul, and thou shalt be established; God is faithful.

Tranent, July 3, 1819. Saturday.—I must record my painful as well as pleasant experiences. Felt last Sabbath in the forenoon as if bereaved of thought and recollection, and could hardly proceed; yet was upheld, and went on till I had gone over what was intended. Was somewhat relieved in the afternoon; but even in my distress these words occurred: "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." I must still go on in hope; the God whose I am, and whom I serve, will not fail me, nor forsake me: in this confidence I begin, and will perform the work to which I am called in the services of word, sacrament, and prayer. I ought to be humble and diffident, but would be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. He will be my rock and my fortress, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. He hath done much for me, and in the close of my life and labours he will not, I hope, cast me off. No, he hath spoken in his holiness. I will rejoice, and find much ground for it, whether with respect to strength or weakness, smiles or frowns, life or death. The following words are encouraging: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever." Psalm cxxv. 2.

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Tranent, July 17, 1819. *Saturday.*—I will love thee, O Lord my strength. Looking into the Song, what strong and striking expressions occur: I remark them, and would be happy to adopt them. I mean to-morrow a cursory view of the account which the spouse gives of her beloved in answer to the question, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" in chap. v. 9—15. I must go, in hope of his love filling my heart, and opening my mouth, to express his unequalled excellency. None but Christ, none but Christ, altogether lovely; of whom I would say, "this is my beloved, this is my friend." Let me reproach myself for my diffidence and distrust; he is a friend that loveth at all times, he will not fail me nor forsake me in a time of need; my praise shall be continually of him, and my boast not in the creature, but in the Beloved, who is the praise of all his saints; to whom I would say, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. Hallelujah, hallelujah!" Amen.

Tranent, July 22, 1819. *Fast-day morning.*—To be publicly engaged in the evening. I take a half hour at present, expressing my feelings and desires; I feel, or I ought to feel, my guilt, my pollution, my misery, and should bewail my case, and cry for mercy. Let me adopt Isaiah's lamentation: "Woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips." Present David's prayer: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." I desire, and I hope my desires are sincere, that the Lord may show me his glory, and make all his goodness to pass before me, countenancing me in his work, and strengthening me for it; so ordering and disposing of every thing in it, that all may go on comfortably and pro-

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fitably to me and his people, and for the glory of his great name. I desire, too, to embrace this opportunity to make a repeated surrender of myself, my family, and my flock, to the Lord, and to do this in the most serious, solemn, and impressive manner. "One shall say, I am the Lord's, another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord;" which, if I deceive not myself, I do in the sincerity of my heart, ROBERT SHIRREFF, who says, "yea, mine own God is he," and hopes the Lord will not reject him.

Tranent, July 27, 1819. *Tuesday.*—Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, and be joyful in their King. These joys are not always felt in their fulness, but there is a solid and sufficient support communicated to the people of God, bearing them up, and carrying them on and through their duties and difficulties; of this I hope the poor writer is a witness, and should be thankful. My feelings were not lively on the late occasion, but there was something experienced which upheld me in my work. Had some comfortable views of the future state, and thought that nothing could separate us from the love of God. (Action sermon text, Rom. viii. 38, 39.) Knowing in whom I have believed, I would live and die in this faith. Alas! that ever there should be doubt or hesitation. The Lord hath been gracious, he hath not smitten us in his anger, he hath spoken comfortably in the ministry of the word, and much for our consolation and instruction. May his blessing succeed all for his glory and for our good; whether the instrument is weak or strong, it is God who must work all in all. May he get to himself a name, and an everlasting sign, that he is Zion's comfort and stability,

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and will build her up in the worst of times and places. "Who is God but the Lord? there is none like the God of Jeshurun."

Tranent, Sept. 11, 1819. *Saturday.*—I expect a brother from the south to assist me to-morrow; hope he will come and speak, under a divine influence, the words of eternal life. As for myself, such are my common impressions that there is none less fit for the important office; but to the praise of that gracious God, in whose service I have been so long employed, I am not despised nor shunned. I will still adhere to my work, and trust that he will uphold and deliver me, sensible of weakness and unworthiness; but he works as he promises, for his name's sake, and to him be all the praise, now and for ever.

Tuesday last our Synod met as usual. I was a silent member; I have neither confidence nor courage to speak out what I would wish to say, and which I often hear better expressed by others than could be done by myself; the Lord knows my heart, and will, I hope, pardon my weakness. It was an agreeable occurrence at this meeting to see some steps taken for promoting the union between the two Associate synods; a measure apparently very acceptable to both parties, and which it is expected will be in course of time adopted and acted upon. The Lord hasten it in his time, and all the happy results fully realized which are presently anticipated. He that scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock.

Tranent, October 28, 1819.—Set apart this day for thanksgiving, humiliation, and prayer; commemorating the goodness of God in the course of the season,

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and anticipating the sacrament of the supper on Sabbath first. Have felt, I hope, some serious impressions, and presented some prayers to the object of our worship, neither unacceptable to him, nor unprofitable to ourselves. I must wait the issue. I am aware of my unworthiness, and know that my best services are polluted and imperfect, but they are to be accepted in the Beloved. I feel myself weak as well as unworthy, but my strength, as well as my righteousness, is of the Lord; it is in this faith I must proceed. Such are my feelings, that I cannot trust to myself; could I express them, they would only be a view of absolute dependence, not in an arm of flesh, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, for the salvation of my soul, and for carrying me on in the work in which I am engaged. It is done; the Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. Amen.

Tranent, Nov. 6, 1819. *Saturday.*—Continuing still easier, I intend part of the service for myself to-morrow, and have the assistance of Dr. B. of which I mean to avail myself. I feel difficulties in the way of duty, and am often at a loss to perceive what is best to be done; not to preach would be a hard case, and even to give up any of the public services would be unpleasant and undesirable. I must therefore go on, looking to the wisdom which is profitable to direct, and requesting of God that he would shew me his ways, and lead me in his truth. O the advantage in knowing how to improve it, and to rely upon it; to have divine direction promised, and the benefit of it felt. "Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go." Good is this word of the Lord,

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may it be fulfilled and experienced in my case. Amen.

This is a dark and rainy day; the heavens are clouded, the rain, often in the form of snow, is incessant; but the wind is calm, and the atmosphere undisturbed. All things are of God; he is the ruler of the material world, saying to the snow "be thou upon the earth; also to the great rain and the small rain of his strength." We know not what may be on the morrow; but there is a kingdom which ruleth over all, in which all is well ordered.

Tranent, November 13, 1819. *Saturday.*—What! shall I be like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke! Ought I not to learn obedience by the things which I suffer? let me behave and quiet myself as a child that is weaned of its mother, and let me hope in the mercy of the Lord from henceforth and for ever; he will not be always wroth. The morning cometh as well as the night; there is a God in whose hand I am, and whose are all my ways; he will pity, and spare, and help me. I will not despond; he is a great help, and hath no obstructions in his way but what are as nothing to him. I must, I will, and I do go to him; he will not reject me,—he is ready to receive all that come unto him, nor will he put away his poor servant in his anger. It grieves me to think of inability for his service,—oppressed, and breathless, and spiritless, I feel unfit for the services of to-morrow, and have engaged Dr. Brown to officiate for me. This is a heavy providence to me, but if it is the will of God, let me cordially acquiesce, still thankful and hopeful, and expecting to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living; and may the Lord speedily interpose and command his loving kindness. Amen and Amen.

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Tranent, Nov. 24, 1819.—Have been in heaviness for some days past; feel rather lighter to-day. May I not hope the Lord will be my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer? In the midst of my thoughts within me, may I be strengthed with strength in the inner man. Let me realize the subject of last Lord's day. David was greatly distressed, but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. Our distresses are both of a temporal and spiritual kind; but under them we are furnished with encouraging doctrines and promises, consolations, wishes, hopes, and expectations,—review these, O my soul, and with them encourage thyself in the Lord thy God,—he will not fail thee. Have been chiefly for two days past glancing at Dr. Buchanan's memoirs: What an eminent man! distinguished in the providence of God for boldness, zeal, and activity. I feel much affection for such men, but how it pains me to think of my own inactivity and uselessness. Woe's me, my leanness, my leanness;—but the Lord knows what is in me.

Tranent, Nov. 27, 1819. Saturday.—My God,—to whom can I go, thou woundest and thou healest; I roll myself upon thee,—surely thou wilt not forsake me,—be mine arm every morning, and my salvation in this time of darkness and distress,—mine eyes are unto thee. I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to bear, to carry, and to deliver; and hope that he will be my strength and my song; and my salvation; in this confidence raise me above my fears, and let me rejoice in thee when in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. I am oppressed, O Lord, undertake for me; and, casting my burden upon thee, may I feel myself sustained. This is intended to be the subject of discourse

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to-morrow; and may I realize it in my own experience, and O let my Lord say so also. Amen, and Amen.

P. S. My case is not singular; David was in the depths, crying unto the Lord; Heman was afflicted, and ready to die; Asaph remembered God, and was troubled. Their troubles had a happy issue,—when they were tried, they came forth as gold, and are now shining as stars in the kingdom of our Father. May I cherish this hope in application to myself, though for a season, if need be, I am in heaviness; yet the thought will occur, "Wherefore is light to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul?" Job iii. 20.

Tranent, Dec. 7, 1819. *Tuesday.*—I ought to be thankful. The Lord deals mercifully with me. I saw yesterday a boy in the depth of a fever, and a young man in the last stage of a consumption: that either of these is not my case, is in the sovereign goodness of God; to him be the glory, and to his glory may I live. O that his glory may be ever in my eye. I regret that I should do so little for this great object; but the Lord knows that it is not owing to aversion. Most gladly would I serve him with my spirit in the gospel of his Son; but such is my weakness, my diffidence, and distrust, that I cannot do the things which I would. Methinks it makes life a burden to me, and will make me more willing to leave the world, where I am for so little use. I am not however without hope that he who wounds will heal; he will bring me up again from the depths of the earth, that I may show forth his praise in the gates of Zion. The Lord hasten his word, to perform it. Whether he smiles or frowns, it is mine still to adore. Amen.

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Tranent, Jan. 1, 1820. *Saturday.*—Still in the deeps, crying for deliverance, waiting in hope. I lament my weakness, confess my sinfulness, and pray, Oh save me, for thy mercies sake. The weather at present is very frosty, and a considerable quantity of snow is covering the earth; whatever the effect is, it becomes me to acknowledge that all things are of God, to whom, as my God and Father Christ, I have often, and do at present commit myself. I am in his hands, let him do with me as he pleaseth; my prayer is that grace, suitable and sufficient, may be afforded. Then, Lord, what thou wilt, when thou wilt, and how thou wilt; all is well that thou doest. Amen.

Tranent, Jan. 5, 1820.—Have not forgotten this day; but, alas! what mournful thoughts does it suggest! yet how thankful ought I to be; he hath dealt wondrously with me, and will, I trust, continue his goodness till I have finished my work, my warfare, and my life: yes, he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; lo, I am with you always." Amen.

Tranent, Jan. 8, 1820. *Saturday.*—Little thing deranges and confuses me,—the Lord stablish, strengthen, and settle me, making my faith and hope stedfast in his promise, that he will be my shield and my exceeding great reward. "Why should I be fearful? have I not known? have I not heard? hath it not been told me, that the everlasting God, the Lord, fainteth not." Isaiah xl. 28. 29.

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APPENDIX.

The amiable and pious writer of the following papers, was, as has been already stated, the youngest daughter of the Rev. William Hutton, Dalkeith. She was born 16th September, 1759, and died 26th August, 1789. Whilst attending her funeral, her pious and affectionate father said to a friend who was present, "I bless God for giving me such a daughter;" and, to show his resignation to the Divine will, he immediately added, "I bless God for taking her away."

In the foregoing notes will be found a short sketch of her character, drawn by the pen of her husband, to which it is not now meant to add any thing. Three of the following papers were published, several years ago, in the Christian Magazine; and some friends who have seen them, believing that their republication, along with some other of her papers, might be productive of good, those relatives into whose hands they have latterly come, have, with this hope, been induced to lay them before the public.

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Nov. 23, 1783. A Complaint.—O my soul, thy goodness is like the morning cloud and the early dew, that soon passeth away,—what aileth thee now, that thou art wholly at a stand, and that thou scarce canst utter a sigh, scarce lift up one feeble wish to the throne of grace? alas! thy folly makes it so,—thine iniquities have separated between thee and thy God; for the rock of Israel is a perfect rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. Come now and let us plead together, declare now, and see if thou canst be justified: Didst thou not lately make a solemn approach to his table, there, didst thou not, before witnessing thousands, and before surrounding angels, avow him for thine only Lord? Didst thou not, in a particular manner, take him for thy portion? Didst thou not swear eternal fidelity to him; and yet, be astonished ye heavens, be horribly afraid at this,—those very sins that crucified thy Lord, those very sins that destroy thy peace, those very sins against which thou didst swear eternal enmity, thou hast winked at, hast indulged; and that Lord who was crucified for thee, that Lord whom thou didst take for thine only portion, that Lord to whom thou didst swear eternal fidelity, even him, thou hast forgotten, hast grieved, hast provoked to depart from thee, and in his absence lies thy misery. O fatal folly, to forsake the fountain of happiness, and seek it in shallow streams! O cursed perjury, to swear to the righteous Lord and then draw back! Is there mercy in store for such complicated guilt? If such treachery, such perjury, such carnality, and such impiety, ever be pardoned, mercy will receive the highest honour; and if he had reason to rejoice who was forgiven seven talents, surely one that is forgiven seventy

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and seven, should spend a whole future life to the praise and glory of a merciful Redeemer.

Some rules for my conduct in life, 1783.—1. Never to be idle, but always to be employed, either in working, reading, or writing. 2. Never to take u much time in dress. 3. Not to walk much about the streets, but to be as much in the house as circumstances will permit. 4. Never to give place to vain thoughts, but to war against them as the enemies of my peace; and whenever they harass me, to fly to prayer as a remedy. 5. To set a watch over my whole conduct, and to mark down the history o every day.

With respect to my conduct as a member of society.—1. To be always ready to forgive an injury, and never to give way to resentment. 2. Never to be angry without the best reason, nor let the mind be ruffled with a trifle. 3. If in a fault, to acknowledge it frankly, and never to palliate it by framing excuses, or throwing the blame upon others. 4. Not to argue with one in a passion, any more than I would talk to a tempest, but be perfectly silent till the storm blow over. 5. Not to be positive in an assertion, but always the first to yield in a trifle. 6. To make no promises but what can be performed, and be careful to perform the promises that are made, whether they be difficult or trifling. 7. Not to be overcome with evil, but to overcome evil with good.—8. To learn to sacrifice inclination to duty in things indifferent, as the way to lead on to it in greater things. 9. To be active and vigorous against evils that can be remedied, but to submit cheerfully

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and without complaint to those that cannot be helped. 10. When in company, to bridle my too much vivacity, and be always readier to hear than to speak. 11. Never to make free with an absent character, and always to put the best construction on people's words and actions. 12. Not to be too ready in telling news, but sometimes rather to appear ignorant of them, than seem to know every thing. 13. Not to praise people to their face, except when there may be occasion for it; as it has too much the air of flattery. 14. To give no countenance to slander, nor to hear with pleasure the faults of others, however just they may be. 15. Always to be suited to the present company as far as sincerity and candour will permit; if grave, to be grave; if cheerful, to be cheerful, &c. 16. To speak but little in the presence of superiors, and ever to pay attention and respect to old age. 17. To make very little use of proverbs and common-place observations, and to endeavour not to speak so much as to speak to the purpose. 18. Not to be too ready in giving my opinion upon any subject, till it be asked, and then to do it with diffidence, especially before my superiors.

On Happiness.—Happiness is the enjoyment of good—happiness is one of the chief ends of our being—happiness is the thirst of all mankind; therefore, all mankind pursue happiness. 'Tis true they seek it in different paths: Some, to attain it, climb the dazzling heights of ambition; some, for its sake, submit to the sordid drudgery of avarice, while others would enjoy it in pleasure's alluring scenes. Is happiness found in any of these pursuits? Ah, no! dizzy with the heights of grandeur, many tumble into ruin. Riches often take to themselves wings and fly away; and the bright blooms of pleasure often conceal the thorny

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sting. Not the utmost gratification of our wishes can yield us happiness, nor does enjoyment ever come up to expectation: So truly sings our poet,

"They build too low, who build beneath the stars!"

Where then is happiness to be found; and where is the place of solid joy? In religion alone: she only can bestow what the world cannot give nor take away. Are we groaning under the miseries of life? Does disappointment thwart our every wish, and emptiness write her name on all our enjoyments? Be it so; religion draws aside the veil, and opens our prospect into that glorious world, where there shall be no more pain, and where we shall drink for ever at the fountain of bliss; and, in this life, religion can sweeten every affliction, soothe under every anguish, comfort under every loss, and raise and support under every abasement. Religion is the highest perfection our nature can attain; therefore, it is our greatest happiness. Speak, ye Saints of God, who best can tell, are ye ever so happy as when you find holiness flourish in your souls? Is there any peace like the peace you feel from a sense of pardoned guilt through the blood of Jesus,—any joy like the joy of the Holy Ghost, when he witnesseth with your spirit that you are the children of God? Even the sorrows of religion have their comforts: groaning under corruptions, wrestling with our spiritual foes, if accompanied by faith, have a sweetness in them far exceeding the pleasures of the world; for they work experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

August 10, 1783. *Sabbath Evening.*—O, my Lord, I have often said, and now I set my seal to the glo-

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rious truth, that thou art my God; and now on this thy holy day, I enter into covenant with thee—I take thee for my God, my portion, and my all—my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—my sacrifice, my great high-priest, my intercessor, my king, and lawgiver—my enlightener, instructor, and guide: I give myself entirely to thee, and subscribe heartily to thy method of salvation by grace alone. I renounce every merit of my own, and in thee alone shall I boast of righteousness and strength. I devote myself to thy service, and through thy grace, will make it the chief business of my life to study holiness, to mortify sin, and to promote thy glory. I cast myself and all my concerns on thy providential care: Do unto me as seemeth thee good, only let me not swerve from thy precepts, and dishonour my profession, and break this solemn covenant; but do thou lead me on from strength to strength, until I appear before thee in Zion. And in thy presence, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, glorious undivided three, I solemnly subscribe the same with my hand, and let it stand in everlasting record on high. MARJORY HUTTON.

January 2, 1785. Reflections on the past year.—'Tis done, another year has revolved: let me take a retrospective of its events.—Ah! dismal scene! how many of my dear friends and acquaintances has it laid in the dust! It has pulled from me my sister, my bosom friend, and deprived me of one to whom I could open the secret recesses of my heart; yet, blessed be God that my dear parents are spared, and are yet enjoying good health,—that I have many valuable relatives still, and that my own health and reason are continued. Let me now look into my soul, and see

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what the prospect affords. Ah! again must I sigh—again recoil at the shocking scene—What abominations are here! Spiritual idolatry, vanity, carnality, earthly mindedness, sloth, hypocrisy, formality, and unbelief, stare me on every side. Six times have I been a partaker of the Lord's Supper; but, ah! how seldom in a right manner, and after any communion with God that I enjoyed, how quickly I returned to my folly! Consequently, how few tokens of his love has he given me; how few smiles of his countenance! A deceived heart has turned me aside. No sooner am I forced from one idol, than I fall down before another, and another succeeds to that. Even at those times when I was most free, how was I carried about with vain thoughts, listlessness, and lukewarmness in devotion. How small my progress in holiness! Nay, compared to this time twelvemonths, I rather seem to be going back. Lcrd, my soul cleaveth to the dust; quicken thou me, according to thy word. Oh, that the coming year may be replete with special mercies to my soul! Whatever way I am disposed of, let religion be my first, my darling study; let me be led in Wisdom's ways, which are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

April 17, 1785. *Vanity of the World.*—Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity. This is the testimony of one who had made the tour of earthly pleasures, had attained the utmost gratification of his wishes, and had enjoyed all that the world could bestow. Sated with the luscious banquet, he returns disgusted, pronouncing all vanity. And shall the important truth be told in vain? Alas! too much in vain to a giddy world, which, dazzled with grandeur, en-

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snared with wealth, and drunk with pleasure, is deaf to every call of experience and truth. And, ah that I should say it! too often has it been said in vain to me. Often have I read it in the word of inspiration. To this, the writings of the best and wisest in all ages bear witness; and this, Providence times without number, has spoken to my heart with an audible voice. No sooner did some supposed excellence, some fancied good, attract mine eye, than, forsaking the path of duty, I wandered after the gilded snare. It is now within reach—another comes, it is snatched away, it is gone for ever—I stand and look around—all is darkness and horror—I am bewildered in a desert—I know not where to turn me—who will direct my wandering steps, and guide my feet unto the way of peace? A merciful God hears my call, and again am I set on a right way, resolved never to turn to the right hand nor to the left. In vain did I resolve—A butterfly, a shadow, has again allured my steps, and brought me into a labyrinth from whence I cannot extricate myself. Gracious power, again do thou save me, for I cannot save myself. O teach me, spirit of truth, to value the things of life as they deserve. And O let eternal realities seize my soul, and transport her to heaven, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God!

May 22, 1785. *Sabbath.*—It is worth remarking, that in the preaching of the gospel, it is most commonly the express words of the Spirit of God that touch the hearts, either of saints or sinners. I believe the experience of the most of Christians will attest the truth of this observation. Little, alas! too little experience have I in religion; but if any that I have

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had was not all mere delusion, I can heartily concur in the above remark. I would not forget the goodness of God to my soul; and therefore, as a help to my weak memory, will set down the texts of Scripture that I hope have been useful to me. Let me never forget the day (4th October, 1781,) when that text beamed with such remarkable lustre on my mind; 1 Cor. xviii. 30. "And of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Here in one compendious view, the gospel appeared in all its glory. My heart was ravished at the sight—I embraced it—I held it as my chief good, and rejoiced in it as my portion. The next that struck me very forcibly was 1 John ii. 1. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." In the character of our intercessor, how amiable did Jesus appear to my guilty, sin-sick-soul! O how did I rejoice in him as my intercessor, my high priest, and my all in all. The 7th chapter of the Romans has often afforded me great consolation, when oppressed and overcome by a body of sin and death. How comforting was it to see the most eminent saint groaning under the same complaint, yet triumphing in the prospect of deliverance! To this I may add, Psalm lxiii. 3; and Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 26, 27; all promises of sanctification and freedom from sin which I very much need. Isaiah xliv. 22, contains a delightful declaration of pardon and redemption, upon which is grounded a free invitation to repentance; this text often yields me comfort and joy. Isaiah lvii. 16. to 19. is also a very comfortable passage; so is Jeremiah iii. 22.; Hebrews vi. last four verses, have been a great encouragement to my hopes; and to my soul laden with guilt, how sweet has been the characters of my surety, as it is beautifully described in Hebrews vii.

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24, 25, 26.; Philippians iv. 19. is a large promise, and upon it my soul has often fed. Many more I could mention, but must stop at present. I shall keep this open, and continue it, as the merciful Providence and grace of God shall give me opportunity.

On Temptation.—Temptation, according to my ideas, lies not alone in the horrid suggestions of Satan; there is a temptation which springs up in our own hearts, that rank soil of corruption. This does not, as the other, terrify and alarm, but being a more insinuating, is a more dangerous foe. Is there any sin, which from habit or constitution, doth more easily beset the mind? How readily does the imagination bend all her force that way! How artfully does she improve every circumstance, every opportunity in its favour! How easily does this pave the way for Satan, who cometh not with dreadful menaces nor fiery darts—these were useless here. Gilded snares, and bewitching wiles, more successfully draw away the soul from God, and provoke the Spirit to depart from her, sap the very foundations of religion, and carry her down the stream of iniquity, and but for the promise, the faithfulness and power of God, would land her in the gulph of endless perdition. Happy the soul who is enabled to watch and pray that she enter not into temptation, who, under an abiding sense of her weakness, and an abiding sense of sin, flies by faith to the merciful high priest, not only for pardon, but such supplies of grace to enable her to stand in the day of temptation—to mortify the power of indwelling sin—to shake off every weight, and the sin that most easily besets her; and by faith, to follow Him who overcame the wicked one, and is now set down upon his throne; with a firm reliance on this promise,—"he that overcometh will I give to sit with me on my throne."

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Preparatory thoughts on the Lord's Supper.—"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup." This was the exhortation of the apostles, and it highly becomes all the partakers of this holy ordinance to attend to it. What then are the things of which I am to examine myself? Of my state; this is a feast only for friends. Let me not then, like Judas, betray the Son of Man with a kiss. Have I been deeply humbled under a sense of sin, as offensive to a holy God, and have I fled by faith to the blood of atonement as the only ransom of my soul? Do I rely entirely on the merits of Christ for acceptance, saying to every other dependence, get thee hence? Am I satisfied with his laws and government, and is holiness the desire of my heart? Is the sin that dwelleth in me my greatest burden, and do I long to be delivered from it? Do I wrestle and strive with my corruptions, or do I indulge myself in any known sin? Do I love the ordinances of God, and is it his presence that I seek in them? If I can answer any of these questions in a satisfactory manner, to his grace be all the glory. Let me labour to attain them all, as what constitutes the character of those who have a right to partake of the Lord's Supper. And what are the ends I have in view in observing this ordinance? They should be an obedience to the divine authority, the glory of God, and the interest of my own soul. I should go there to obey our Lord's dying command, Do this in remembrance of me: There I should go for nourishment to my languishing graces, for mortification to my inbred corruptions, for strength for my spiritual warfare, and for grace to help in every time of need. Does any sin lie heavy on my conscience? The sin of unworthy communicating in my last approach unto God in this ordi-

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nance greatly burdens me. Let me bring that unto God; the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin, and from this too; only let me beware of the rock on which I have split: that was rashness, irreverence, and want of preparation. The preparation of the heart cometh from God: let me then implore it of him, for of all these things will he be inquired of. Is there any weakness under which I labour, any difficulty with which I have to struggle? God knows there is; my own soul knows there is, from her sad experience; let me take this also to God, that he may do away the guilt of it by the great propitiatory sacrifice; and that he may cleanse me from it by his sanctifying spirit. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me; but the Lord hath the hearts of all men in his hands, and turneth them whithersoever he will. He can work against the opposition of nature, constitution, and corruption, and shew his grace triumphant over them all. Let me then depend upon that promise made of old to his apostle, nay, to every Christian in every age: "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be made perfect in your weakness." Above all, let me strive frequently at a throne of grace, where he dispenses his favours, and there lay hold on him by faith, and not let him go, till he promise in this ordinance to bless me; that the Holy Spirit may descend in his reviving operations on my soul; that he would send forth his light and his truth, to lead me and to bring me unto his holy hill, even the place of his habitation; that my soul may rejoice in the light of his countenance, and may in his favour be exalted.

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